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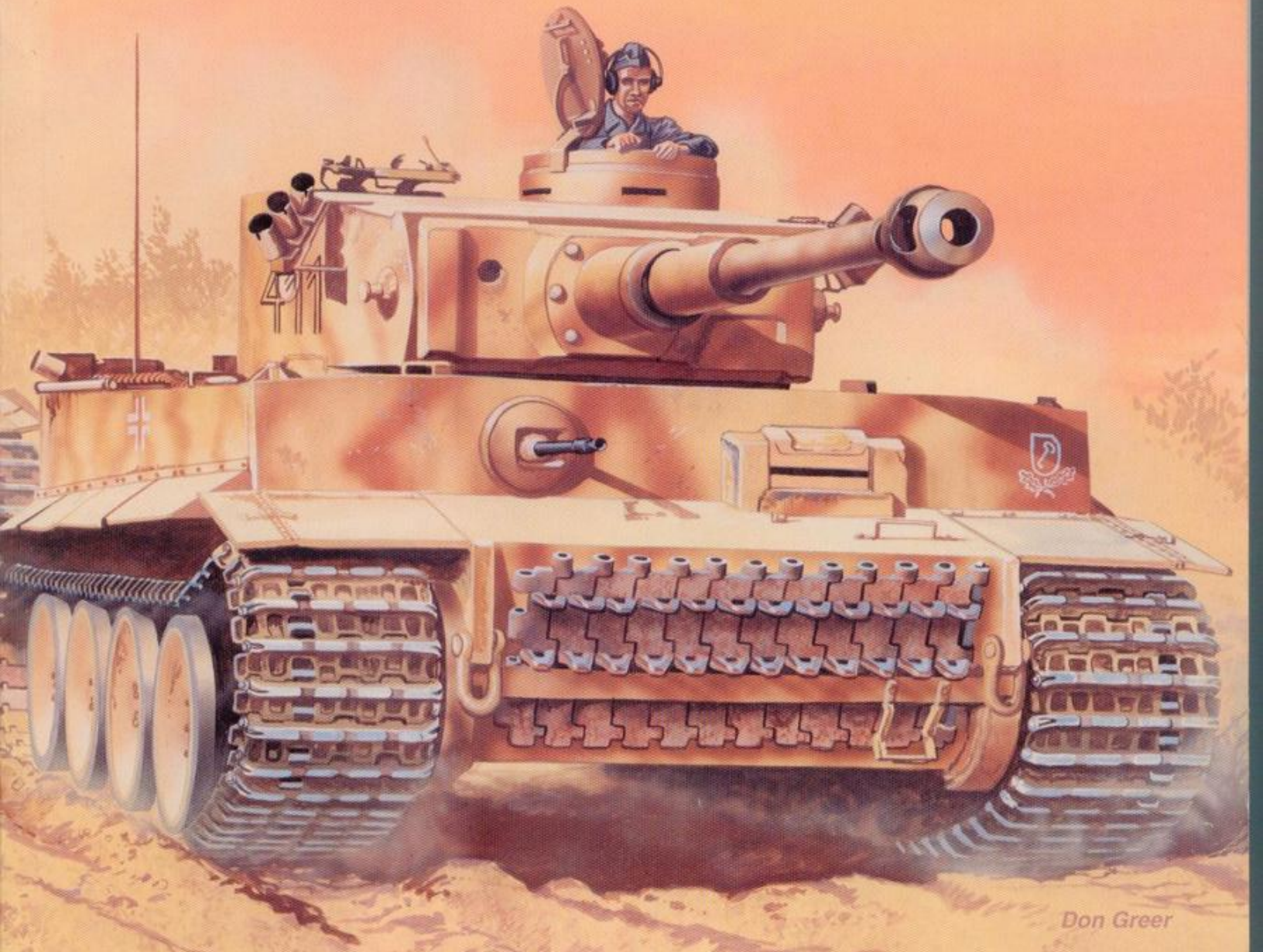
Panzer Colors III

Markings of the German Panzer Forces 1939-45

by Bruce Culver



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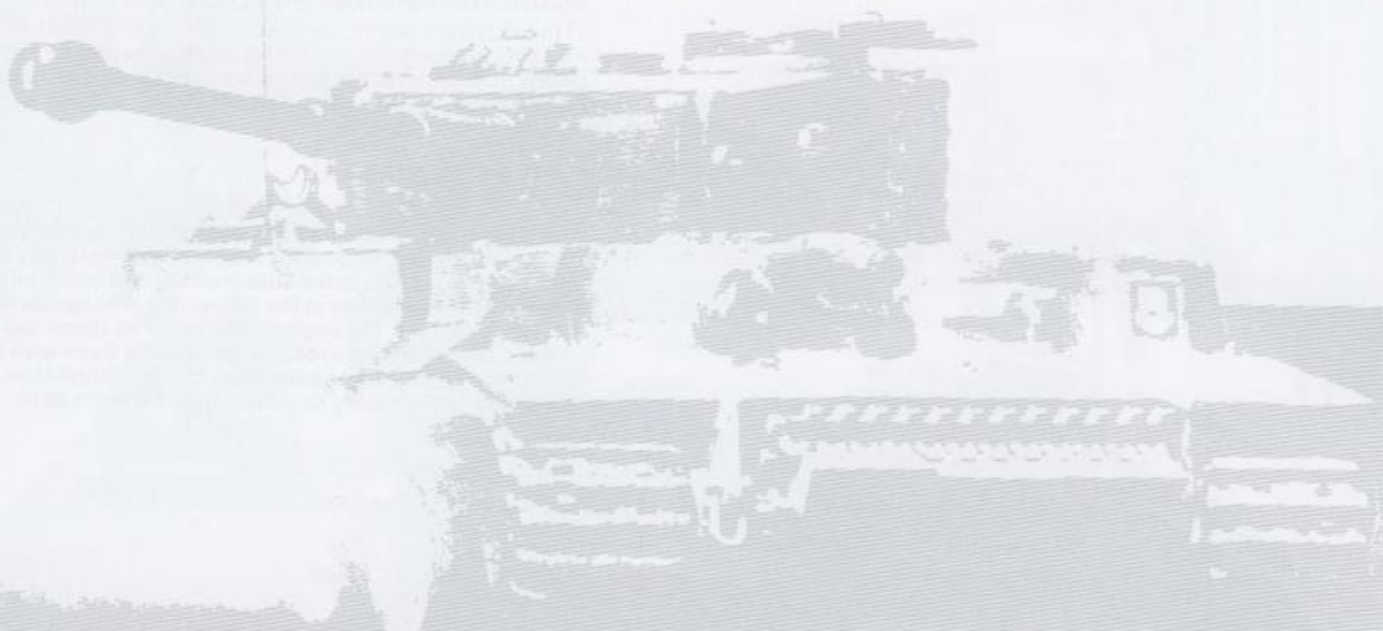

by Bruce Culver
illustrated by Don Greer

squadron/signal publications

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Returned from the Russian front after the battle at Kursk, 1st SS Panzer Division "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler" was sent to Italy for refitting and training. This column of PzKpfw IVs in Milan carries the three-color camouflage scheme — also applied over spare tracks and tools — and the later form of the division's tactical symbol. (NARS)

Acknowledgements

In common with *Panzer Colors II*, this volume is the result of research and assistance by many individuals and organizations who cooperated in gathering and passing on information concerning WW II German Panzer markings.

In the United States, several people helped with data and translations. Tom McGuirl translated correspondence and provided additional reference materials. Jon Randolph continued his comprehensive searching through hundreds of publications to give me much additional material on *Waffen SS* unit markings and Tiger battalion markings. I have continued to use Tom Jentz's research data gleaned from the extensive German document collection in the National Archives. The staff of the National Archives Audio-Visual section, especially Paul White, assisted in the examination of over 5,000 armor-related photos. Steve Zaloga also contributed much information gathered from his research efforts.

Dave List in England provided WW II British intelligence reports which described many German unit markings found in the Mediterranean Theater. Hiroshi Kitamura sent material dealing with the temporary markings used at Kursk. Additional data came from articles published in various military historical magazines and journals. These include articles by Armin L. Sohns and James Steuard in AFV News, and other articles in AFV-G2. Photo collections published in other magazines were also most helpful.

A number of books also proved invaluable during the preparation of this work. Bender Publications has covered the history of the *Waffen SS* units in a series of books, and these were useful for unit historical information and markings. The excellent Motorbuch Verlag book *TIGER* by Egon Kleine and Volkmar Kuhn was a primary source for the section dealing with the Tiger battalions deployed by *Wehrmacht* units during the war. Additional material on the Tiger markings came from Bill Murphy's articles in AFV News, which provided a good synopsis of the subject and helped to organize the material.

Special thanks are due to Rob Stern, who went over his extensive material on the development of the tactical and unit markings for the *Waffen SS Panzer Divisions*, and to Don Greer, who, as usual, has made all of this look better than it might have.

Again, it is the German veterans' groups which have contributed much of the information contained in this book. In spite of lost records, blurred memories, and sometimes enigmatic photographs, a number of German veterans did send me data on their old units. These contributions ranged from recollections of markings systems to unit histories, tables of organization, samples of newsletters, and other material.

Heinrich Nolte of the *18th Panzergrenadier Division* contributed to the section on these "alternate" *Panzer Divisions*, which is what they often became. Alfred Otte, of *Fallschirm Panzerkorps Hermann Göring*, knowing of the unusual markings system used by this *Luftwaffe* unit, sent very complete coverage of *HG*, including a listing of *HG* units, a complete set of markings for the *PzKps*, and over two dozen photographs from his private collection, showing markings as applied to the unit's vehicles. I am deeply indebted to Herr Otte for his very generous assistance with the *Luftwaffe* section of this book.

As was true with *Panzer Colors II*, I am especially grateful to the extraordinary efforts of *Oberstlt.* A.D. Rolf O.G. Stoves, of *1st P.D.* and *21st P.D. (DAK)*. Again, he has provided me with materials covering virtually the entire deployment of German armored units in World War II. He has also given me the benefit of his wartime experiences and post-war studies to help pull together much of the other material I received from other sources. Without his efforts, it is doubtful that this book could have been written in its present form. With his assistance, this volume continues the history begun in *Panzer Colors I* and *II*. To *Herr* Stoves, and to all who have assisted in the compilation of material for this project, I offer my thanks, and hope that this book serves as a fitting remembrance of events that are now nearly 40 years old.

Bruce Culver
October 1983

Introduction

This third volume in the series on WW II German military vehicle camouflage and markings covers the major units not part of the *Heer* (Army) *Panzer Division* establishment. It includes the *Panzergrenadier Divisions, Waffen SS Panzer Divisions*, Tiger tank battalions, and *Sturmgeschutz* formations.

At one time, most of the *Heer Panzer Divisions* were formed as divisions from smaller units, which were combined and retrained for the needs of armored warfare. Later in the war, some of the newer *Panzer Divisions*, as they were formed, went through an intermediate stage as *Panzergrenadier Divisions*. The essential difference between a *Panzer Division* and a *Panzergrenadier Division* was in the balance between armor and infantry. Most *Panzergrenadier Divisions* had only one *Abteilung* (battalion) of tanks rather than a tank regiment with two battalions. Some of the "elite" *Panzergrenadier* units did, however, acquire complete tank regiments before being designated as full *Panzer Divisions*. This will be covered in some detail.

Other *Panzergrenadier Divisions* were created to supplement the *Panzer Divisions*. In most cases, the assignment of only one *Panzer Abteilung* was necessitated by shortages of vehicles and supplies. Thus, the *Panzergrenadier Divisions* provided an efficient way to expand the *Wehrmacht* 's armored forces without requiring an excessive burden on tank production and supplies. Most *Panzergrenadier Divisions* were formed by reorganizing motorized infantry divisions, or by consolidating various smaller units remaining after heavy combat actions had decimated larger units. As a result, the basic tactical markings used by the units within these divisions were identical to the standard systems described in *Panzer Colors II*. This third volume will describe the symbols and markings used by several of the *Panzergrenadier Divisions* that did see service as armored units. Not all the divisions originally intended as *Panzergrenadier* units actually received their alloted supplies of tanks and other armored vehicles.

The *Waffen SS* was the field army of the *SS* organization headed by Heinrich Himmler. A great number of books deal with the general history of the *SS* and *Waffen SS* in World War II, and the reader is referred to these basic histories for an understanding of the role of the *SS* during the Third Reich. There has always been a great deal of controversy about the *Waffen SS*, which actually started during the 1930s. Many German Army commanders didn't like the fact that the *Waffen SS* units competed for equipment, and yet were under a separate command structure. *Waffen SS* formations were often better equipped and supplied than comparable *Heer* units, but the difference was not as great among the *Panzer* and *Panzergrenadier Divisions*. In fact, many *Heer Panzer Divisions* were equipped as well as most of the *Waffen SS* units, while some *Waffen SS* troops were issued sub-standard captured or expropriated foreign equipment.

Waffen SS Panzer units used the same tactical markings developed for the *Heer* armor formations. As was demonstrated in *Panzer Colors II*, variations from standard practices did exist, but the individual unit symbols were the same. The *SS* units did, however, apply division signs and symbols to many of their tanks as well as other armored vehicles, and these will be described in the section on the *Waffen SS*. These unit markings, in some cases, evolved over months or years, and we have been able to illustrate the changes in many of the division signs that were used. The temporary markings used during the *Kursk* offensive *(Zitadelle)* have been described also, with additional material on *Heer Panzer Division* deceptive markings.

The formation of *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) field armored units was perhaps the most obvious example of the interservice rivalry that plagued much of the German war effort during World War II. *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring insisted that his *Luftwaffe* should have field units if Himmler's *SS* could equip their own combat troops. Many of the *Luftwaffe Fallschirmjäger* (paratroop) formations were very successfully employed during the opening phases of the war in the West. The *Luftwaffe* had a highly trained and disciplined paratroop force, which contributed directly to German victories in the Western campaign, Greece, and Crete. Although paratroops were not dropped from planes later in the war, *Luftwaffe* ground troops compiled a record as effective and determined fighting units. The *Luftwaffe Hermann Göring Panzer* formations fought from Africa through Italy in the Mediterranean, then serving in Russia, Poland, East Prussia, and finally in the defense of Saxony and Upper Silesia in Germany itself.

Hermann Göring units used a unique system for designating units within a division, and this system will be covered fully, and completely illustrated. In many ways, it was even more efficient than the standard *Heer* (Army) system of markings. However there was probably not too much confusion with *Heer* markings since, for much of the war, personnel were seldom transferred from one service to another.

The markings of the famous *Ramcke Brigade* in North Africa are shown in photographs, as this unit was perhaps the best known *Luftwaffe* unit after *Hermann Göring*. Though many smaller *Luftwaffe* units, especially flak detachments, existed, many of these served as parts of other formations. At one time, most of the heavy flak units in *Heer Panzer Divisions* were *Luftwaffe* battalions. These units carried the signs of the main formation. *Panzer Colors II* lists all the markings of the *Heer Panzer Divisions*, and the standard *Heer* tactical signs that the divisional units used.

Grossdeutschland was perhaps the most distinctive of the *Heer Panzer* units. From its beginnings as a guard detachment before the war, *GD* grew until it was a full *Panzerkorps* containing several divisions. Apart from brief service in the Yugoslavia campaign in early 1941, *Grossdeutschland* served on the Eastern front until the final battles of 1945. As an "elite" unit of the German Heer, *GD* was enlarged and equipped to undertake the increasingly heavy combat responsibilities demanded by the army high command. It suffered heavy casualties, but fought with distinction through the war. As an army formation, *GD* used the standard unit tactical signs. The famous *GD* helmet is the only marking distinguishing this formation's vehicles. A representative sample of *GD* vehicles and markings is illustrated.

The very real combat advantages of the Tiger tank, combined with tactical doctrines and propaganda advantages, led to the formation of separate Tiger Battalions. These special *schwerer* (heavy) *Panzer Abteilungen (sPzAbt)* allowed the deployment of these new heavy tanks to capitalize on their combat superiority. Only a few *Panzer Divisions* had organic Tiger battalions. Most of the Tiger units were held at higher levels of command and were assigned to the various *Panzer Divisions* for specific actions or campaigns.

As truly elite units, Tiger battalions were able to draw from the best men in the *Wehrmacht*, and received the best training possible. Indeed, since the Tigers required regular preventive maintenance, this training was needed to ensure the reliable operation of the vehicles in action. As independent units with high morale, the Tiger battalions developed perhaps the most varied markings and numbering systems of any *Panzer* formations. In some cases, these markings followed those of the divisions to which the Tigers were assigned. In other examples, Tiger battalion markings and vehicle numbers were different from the standard system. Markings and turret number systems for Tiger units (*Heer* and *Waffen SS*) are covered in a separate section, which includes both attached and independent battalions.

Self-propelled antitank weapons were used from the first year of the war, along with other types of SP artillery. The most highly developed, and best armored, vehicles in this category were the assault guns (*Sturmgeschütz*). Initially used to support infantry assaults on fortified enemy positions, the *StuG III* (and *IV*) became one of the most effective antitank weapons in the *Wehrmacht's* arsenal. Like the Tiger tanks, assault guns were organized into independent units. Some of these were assigned to large formations, but most were maintained at higher levels and committed to action as part of an attacking or defending Corps or Army level force. The shortage of tanks later in the war often led to equipping elements of some *Panzer* units with *StuG IIIs* in place of tanks. Other divisions had *StuG IIIs* to replace or supplement the lighter open SP antitank weapons. The section on the *Sturmgeschütz* formations covers the development of these unit organizations and shows representative samples of some of the dozens of *StuG* units that fought during the war.

As illustrated in *Panzer Colors II*, there were many variations in German markings and number systems, and often photographs can lead to a certain amount of confusion. Some units did not use the same markings during the whole conflict. Other units, at least for a time, didn't use any markings. The standard practices, which were followed by many formations, may be only a very rough guide for other units. The photographs in this book provide the best overall picture of the markings practices of these German armored units, and the color illustrations show especially well the details of these markings systems as applied to vehicles of all units within the larger formations.

Panzergrenadier Divisions

Several divisions in the *Panzertruppe* establishment were formed specifically as *Panzergrenadier Divisions*. Though a number of such units eventually were converted to full *Panzer Division* status, some formations remained *Panzergrenadier Divisions* to the end of their service.

In general, the primary difference between a *Panzer Division* and a *Panzergrenadier Division* was in the balance between armor and infantry. *Panzergrenadier Divisions* normally had only one *Panzer Abteilung* (tank battalion) instead of a tank regiment with two battalions. Also, only one infantry battalion in the *Panzergrenadier Regiment* was issued armored personnel carriers (usually the *Sdkfz 251*). Variations in the number of vehicles available occasionally did not allow completely equipping even one battalion with APCs.

A fully-equipped *Panzergrenadier Division* served as a complement to the full *Panzer Divisions*. Indeed, many *Panzergrenadier Divisions* were employed exactly as though they were full *Panzer Divisions*! Skilled commanders and troops often overcame their weakness in tank strength by reinforcing the tanks and infantry with flak guns and assault guns or tank destroyers (*Panzerjäger* units, equipped with *Marder IIs* or other self propelled antitank guns). A few *Panzergrenadier Divisions* were equipped with full *Panzer* Regiments (such as *Grossdeutschland*). Others never received a tank unit, and had to improvise using assault guns, tank destroyers, or towed antitank guns.

Most *Panzergrenadier Divisions* were formed by incorporating tank and armored artillery units into existing motorized infantry divisions. Depending on the equipment that was available, the added armor units generally included a tank battalion, equipped with *Pzkpfw III* and *IV* tanks; an armored reconnaissance battalion *(Panzer Aufklarungs Abteilung)* or a motorcycle reconnaissance battalion *(Kradshutz Abteilung)*, usually containing some light armored cars; self-propelled antitank guns *(Panzerjäger Abteilung)* or assault guns *(Sturmgeschütz)*; and self-propelled field artillery to equip at least one battalion of the artillery regiment.

From 1942 through 1944, several *Panzergrenadier Divisions* were formed from existing infantry units. The table below shows the relationship between the division number designations:

3rd Inf. Div. (mot.)	3rd PzGren. Div.
10th Inf. Div. (mot.)	10th PzGren. Div.
16th Inf. Div. (mot.)	16th PzGren. Div.
18th Inf. Div. (mot.)	18th PzGren. Div.
22nd Inf. Div. (mot.)	22nd PzGren. Div.
25th Inf. Div. (mot.)	25th PzGren. Div.
60th Inf. Div. (mot.)	60th PzGren. Div.

The *14th Inf. Div. (mot)* was scheduled for reorganization (as *14th PzGren. Div.*) but was never equipped fully and became a horsedrawn infantry division by 1944. The *36th PzGren. Div.* formed from the *36th Inf. Div. (mot)*, never received a tank battalion or armored SP artillery vehicles. The *20th PzGren. Div.*, formed from *20th Inf. Div. (mot)*, never received a tank battalion but did receive an armored reconnaissance squadron (with armored cars) in 1943. In 1944, one SP artillery battalion and one *Panzergrenadier* company in *Sdkfz 251 SPW* (APC) were added to the armor units. In 1944-45, a *Sturmgeschutz* battalion was attached to the division.

Other *Panzergrenadier Divisions* were formed by combining surviving units or personnel from destroyed or disbanded formations. In some cases, most of the personnel were taken from older units; in other situations, the veterans formed cadres to train new or replacement troops. The *3rd PzGren. Div.*, destroyed at Stalingrad as part of the German *6th Armee* under *FeldMarshall* Paulus, was reformed in Italy from troops of the *386th PzGren. Div. 15th PzGren. Div.* was formed from survivors of *15th Pz. Div. (DAK)*, destroyed in Tunisia, plus troops from *PzAbt. 215* (a *StuG* unit) and *Division Sizilien*. The *PzGren. Div. Feldhermhalle* was created to replace *60th PzGren. Div.*, destroyed at Stalingrad, and *90th PzGren. Div.* was formed around survivors of *90th Leichte Division (DAK)*, which had been destroyed in Tunisia. Late in the war, a number of ad hoc units were formed the same way. Few reached divisional strength, most being designated as *Kampfgruppen* (battle groups).

All of the complete *Panzergrenadier Divisions* used distinctive unit insignia in addition to the small unit tactical signs seen on most German vehicles. The most common colors were the standard Yellow Ochre, and White, but some of the most complex symbols were in two or three colors. As was true of the *Panzer Divisions*, it is likely that, in some *Panzergrenadier Divisions*, the tanks of the tank battalion did not carry the division sign. However, in many other *PzGren.* formations, the tanks did carry these symbols.

3rd Panzergrenadier Division was formed from *3rd Infantry Division* (motorized) in late 1942. The *3rd Inf. Div. (mot.)* had seen service in Poland and France during the campaign in the West, and in mid-1942 it was part of *14th Panzerkorps* of *4th Panzer Armee* (Hoth) on the Eastern Front. It was destroyed at Stalingrad with *FeldMarschall* Paulus' *6th Armee* in January 1943.

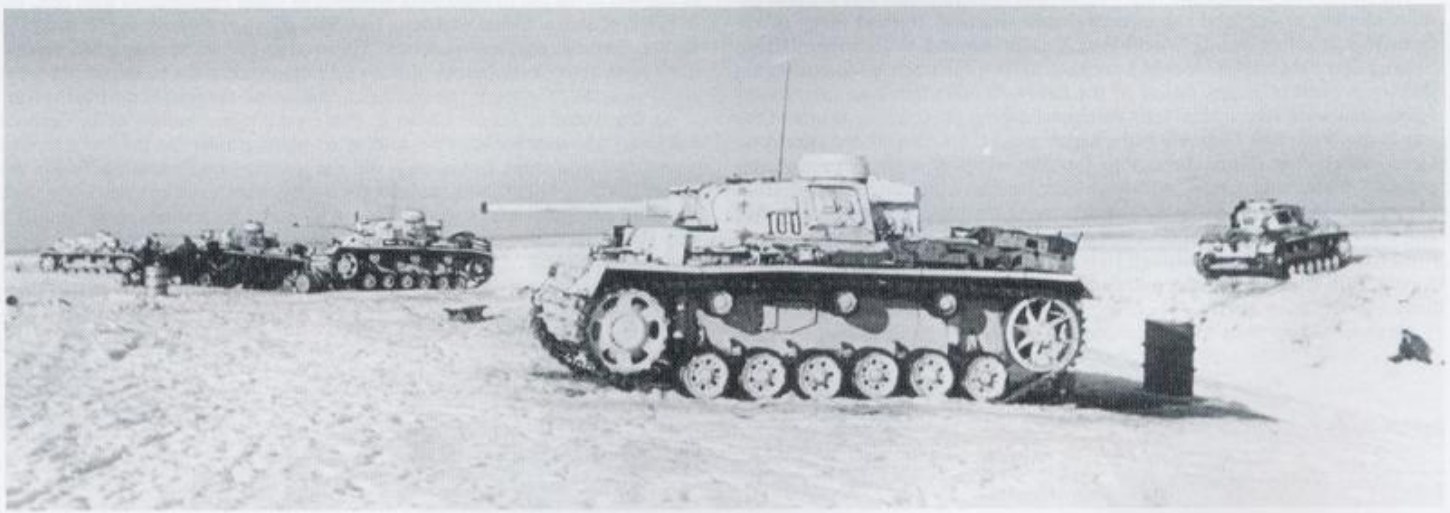
3rd Panzergrenadier Division was reformed in Italy in 1943, with the bulk of the new troops coming from the *386th Panzergrenadier Division*. The division served in Italy, opposing the Allied landings at Salerno, and later served at Cassino as part of the German *10th Armee*. The *3rd Panzergrenadier Division* was held in reserve by *OKW* during the Ardennes offensive in December 1944.

The division sign was a vertical line with two cross bars set at an angle rising from left to right. The sign was used by both "old" and "new" *3rd PzGren. Divs.* It was usually painted in the standard deep Yellow Ochre, but Red was used for signs painted on White camouflage paint.

10th Panzergrenadier Division was reformed from *10th Inf. Div. (mot.)*, which was also a veteran of the Polish and French campaigns. During BARBAROSSA, *10th Inf. Div. (mot.)* was part of *26th Armeekorps*, then was as signed to *43rd. Panzerkorps* of the *4th Armee*. After being designated *10th PzGren. Div.*, the division fought at Kursk during OPERATION ZITADELLE as part of *41st Panzerkorps*. The remnants of *10th PzGren. Div.* fought in 1945, serving in *24th Panzerkorps* of *1st Panzer Armee*.

As the *10th Inf. Div. (mot.)*, the unit sign was a large letter *F*, painted in Yellow Ochre. After being redesignated as *10th PzGren. Div.*, the symbol was replaced by a key emblem, usually painted in White.

3rd Panzergrenadier Division adopted as its tactical sign a vertical bar with two angled slashes. This was normally painted in the usual Yellow Ochre color, but on White camouflaged vehicles, such as this PzKpfw III, the division sign was painted in Red. The turret number was Black (100 designated the tank belonging to the commander of the 1st company). (Bundesarchiv)



15th Panzergrenadier Division was formed in mid-1943, from survivors of *15th Panzer Division (DAK)*, destroyed in Tunisia, and troops of *Division Sizilien*. *PzAbt 215* (a *Sturmgeschutz* unit) was the basis for the division's tank battalion, *PzAbt. 115*. The division fought in the defense of Sicily and was destroyed during this campaign, with survivors being evacuated across the Messina straits to Italy.

Because *15th PzGren. Div.* fought alongside the *Luftwaffe's Hermann Göring Pz. Div.*, there has been some confusion as to the division symbols used by these two formations. The sign used by the *15th PzGren. Div.* was a White five-pointed star. For each unit in the division, the commanding officer's initial was painted in Black in the center of the star. *PzGren. Rgt. 104* had a Black *E* in the star symbols on its vehicles, as Oberst Ens was the Commanding Officer; *PzGren. Rgt. 129*, commanded by Oberst Fullriede, carried a Black *F*; and *PzAbt. 115* carried a Black *G*.

16th Panzergrenadier Division was formed from the *16th Inf. Div. (mot.)* in 1942, in Russia. The division fought in the Caucasus and the Donetz and Dnieper river battles during 1943. In early 1944, *16th PzGren. Div.* was transferred to France for reorganization as a full Panzer Division (*116th Pz. Div*). The unit symbol for *16th Inf. Div. (mot.)* was a three-armed "Sun Wheel" in Yellow Ochre. The symbol for *16th PzGren. Div.* was a greyhound running across a strip of ground — this sign was White. When *16th PzGren Div.* reformed to create *116th Pz. Div.*, a White oval was added to the greyhound symbol.

18th Panzergrenadier Division was formed from *18th Inf. Div. (mot.)*. The unit tactical sign was a Yellow Ochre *V* with a horizontal bar across the arms halfway up from the apex.

20th Panzergrenadier Division was reorganized from *20th Inf. Div. (mot.)*, which had fought in Poland, France and the invasion of Russia (BARBAROSSA). After becoming *20th PzGren. Div.*, this unit fought on the Eastern Front as part of *24th Panzerkorps (Nehring)* in *1st Panzerarmee*. After being driven west by the advancing Russians in 1944, the remnants of *20th PzGren. Div.* were sent to defend Berlin, taking up positions on the Seelow Heights east of Berlin in April of 1945. The symbol of *20th Inf. Div. (mot.)* was a Yellow Ochre stylized anchor. The *20th PzGren. Div.* used a White dice cube with five spots in Black.

22nd Panzergrenadier Division was redesignated from the *22nd Inf. Div. (mot.)*. The *22nd Inf. Div.* had taken part in the German attack on Belgian forts as glider troops. It then fought in the Crimean area in Russia. At the end of 1942, *22nd PzGren. Div.* was transferred to Crete, remaining there for the rest of the war. This division carried the title *Luftlande* in honor of their role as glider troops in Belgium. The division symbol was a Red and White checkered and striped shield.

25th Inf. Div. (mot.) was converted to *25th PzGren. Div.* in late 1942. The division's armor battalion was equipped with *Stug III* assault guns. In 1944, the division was reorganized, *PzAbt. 8* being reorganized as *PzAbt. 125*, and *PzAbt. 127* added to complete a full reorganization to rebuild the unit after heavy losses. The division sign was three stylized antler racks in White. Other colors may have been used on snow camouflaged vehicles.

60th Panzergrenadier Division was formed from *60th Inf. Div. (mot.)*, which was formed in 1939 and fought in the Polish and French campaigns. *60th PzGren. Div.* did not have tanks or assault guns until May 1942, when it was reinforced with *PzAbt. 160* (from *18th Pz. Div.)*, plus an armored reconnaissance battalion, an armored S.P. artillery battalion, and other support units. *60th PzGren. Div.* fought as part of Paulus' *6th Armee* and was destroyed at Stalingrad.

A new *60th PzGren. Div.* was formed in France during the spring of 1943. Units came from the army replacement system and tank training troops. The *Wachte Regiment* (Watch Regiment) of the commander of the *SA (Sturm Abteilungen)* was the basis for the infantry, pioneer and radio units. A very effective division, *60th PzGren. Div.* fought in Russia through 1943, ending the year in very heavy winter fighting near Smolensk. Cited three times for outstanding service, *60th PzGren. Div.* was renamed *Panzergrenadier Division Feldherrnhalle* honoring the building in Munich where the 1923 Putsch had been organized. Nearly destroyed by early 1944, *PzGren. Div. FHH* was reinforced near Minsk, and was virtually destroyed during the great Russian summer offensive of 1944.

A second *PzGren. Div. FHH* was formed in Hungary during the autumn of 1944. Cadres came from *FHH* veterans who escaped the previous unit's destruction. Much of the personnel in this new *FHH* came from *Hitler Jugend* (Hitler Youth) and the *SA*. The unit — at brigade strength — was committed to combat in East Hungary. Reinforced with *110th Panzer* Brigade, *FHH* was wiped out during the defense of Budapest — only 240 soldiers escaped the city. Reorganized yet again in March 1945, *FHH* fought in defense of Gyor, Bratislava (Breslau), and Brno (Brunn) in Czechoslovakia, surrendering to Patton's forces in Bohemia.

The unit sign for *60th PzGren. Div.* was two small crosses in Yellow ar ranged one above the other. The symbol for *PzGren. Div. Feldherrnhalle* was a *Wolfsangel*, similar to that for *19th Pz. Div.*, painted in Yellow Ochre. The second symbol was adopted when the unit was designated as *PzGren. Div. FHH*. It was used during 1944-45.

90th Panzergrenadier Division was formed in late 1943, from the remnants of *90th Light Division (DAK)* destroyed in Tunisia and *Division Sardinien*, a garrison division consisting of various units stationed on the island of Sardinia. From Sardinia, it went to Corsica, then Italy, where it formed part of the Army Reserve behind the Cassino front. *90th PzGren. Div.* took part in the second battle of Cassino and served in the Italian campaign to the end of the war.

The division's symbol as a White map of Sardinia to commemorate the place where the division was reformed. Over the White map was painted a bayonet. The color of the bayonet was determined by the branch of service of the smaller unit within the division. Thus, the division staff would have a Green bayonet, the artillery regiment bayonet sign would be Red, and the tank battalion, tank destroyer battalion, and assault gun battalion would have carried a Pink bayonet on their signs.

A field kitchen truck of self-propelled antitank gun battery of 10th motorized Infantry Division tows a 2cm Flak 30 during the invasion of Poland, September 1939. The unit symbol for the division was a large letter "F" painted in the Yellow Ochre normally used for unit insignia. The antitank unit tactical sign is in White. Note the two Red Feldpost stamps on the rear license plate. (Bundesarchiv)

A late production SdKfz 232 armored car of 15th Panzergrenadier Division travels down a road in Sicily in support of "Hermann Göring" troops. The star mast radio antenna replaced the earlier conspicuous frame antenna. This vehicle has a light mottle of Red Brown and Olive Green. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above Right) Two SdKfz 231s of 15th Panzergrenadier Division display the unit's unique tactical symbol — a White five-pointed star. Barely visible inside the star is the initial of the unit commander. Because 15th Panzergrenadier Division served alongside troops of the Luftwaffe's "Hermann Göring" Panzer Division, there has been some confusion as to which unit used the White star during the Sicilian campaign. (Bundesarchiv)

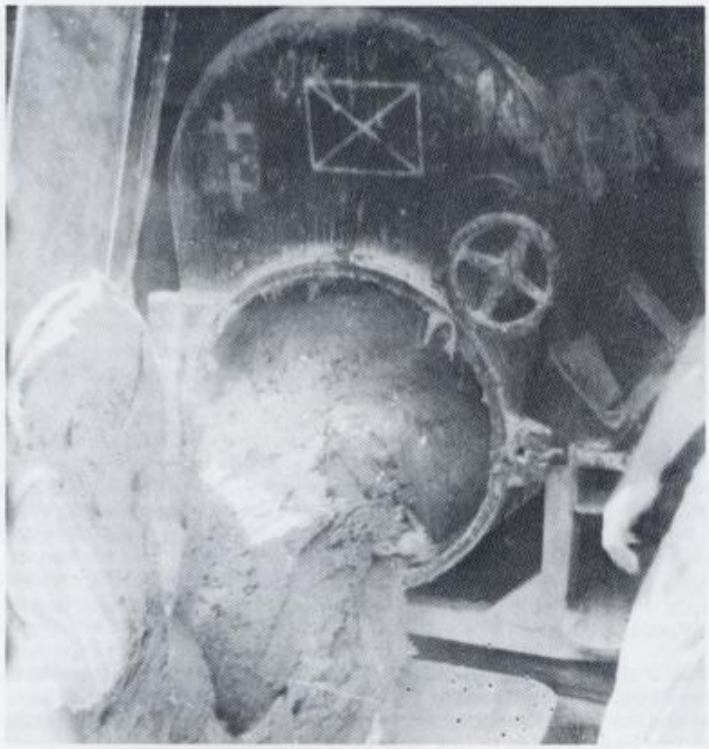
(Right) This destgroyed PzKpfw IV ausf G of 15th Panzergrenadier Division carries the division's White star on the rear plate, with the commander's initial inside. The company number (3rd company) is in Black on a White shield, outlined in Red, with a knight's head in Red on top. (Public Archives of Canada)

(Below) This PzKpfw IV ausf H of 15th Panzergrenadier Division carries two unit symbols. Alongside the White star of the division is the White rhomboid and number of the second company of sPzAbt 504, the Tiger battalion which supported both 15th Panzergrenadier Division and "Hermann Göring" Panzer Division during the campaign in Sicily. (Bundesarchiv)

This Mercedes military car of 16th Panzergrenadier Division displays several tactical symbols and markings. The division sign was a three arm "sun wheel" in Yellow Ochre on the left front fender. White width markings are on both front fenders, and the markings for the fifth battery of the towed artillery regiment are painted in Red and outlined in White. The vehicle is overall Dark Gray. (Bundesarchiv)

This three ton truck of the pioneer (engineer) battalion of 18th Panzergrenadier Division is seen during the winter of 1942-43 in Russia. The truck is dark gray with worn White width markings on the fenders. Painted in White is the tactical sign for the pioneer battalion. Above this is the Yellow Ochre symbol for 18th Panzer grenadier Division, a "V" with a horizontal bar through it. Note the straw packed around the truck's radiator to help keep the engine running at the proper warm temperature. (Bundesarchiv)

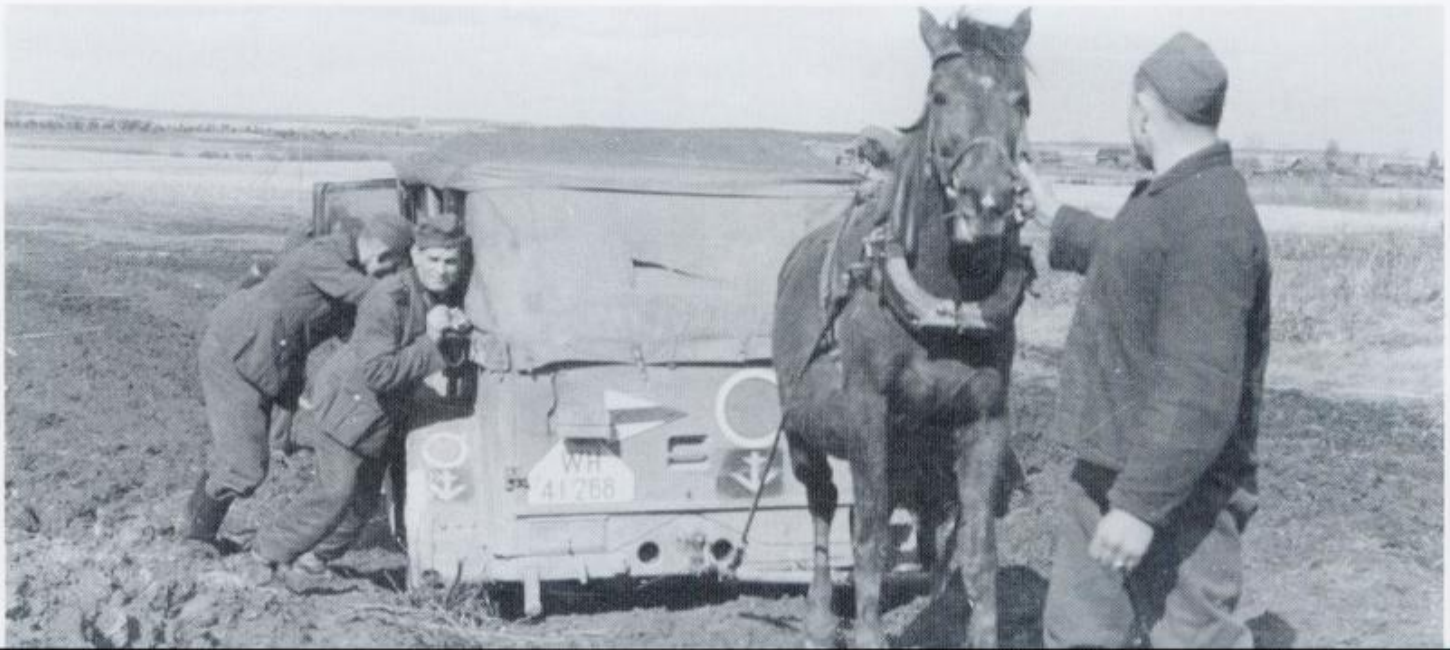
A PzKpfw III ausf J of 16th Panzergrenadier Division carries the division sun wheel sign on a sprayed patch of darker color on a basic color scheme of Dark Yellow. The sun wheel and the tank turret number are both in White. A light random mottle of Olive Green has been applied to this vehicle. (Bundesarchiv)



This column of SdKfz 222 armored cars of 36th Panzer grenadier Division shows the weathering effects of operating in the Russian campaign during rainy weather. The division symbol is painted in White on the side of the car, a good contrast against the Dark Gray paint. (Bundesarchiv)

(Left) A bread dough mixer of a field kitchen belonging to the 60th Panzergrenadier Division displays the division's unit sign, two Yellow Ochre crosses. The White tactical sign above probably indicates a unit of the field kitchen company. (Bundesarchiv)

A medium Einheits car of 20th Infantry Division (motorized) carries a variety of markings. The division symbol, a stylized anchor, is in Yellow Ochre on Black square patches. The reconnaissance battalion pennant is Yellow and Black. The tactical sign is non-standard, apparently a variation of the sign for motorcycle units, and is also in White. (Bundesarchiv)



Waffen SS

Although the *SS (Shutz-Staffel)* had established its first paramilitary police and security units as early as 1933, the formation of armored units lagged behind that of the *Heer* (Army). *SS-Verfungungstruppen (SS-VT — SS* special purpose troops) participated in prewar military (and political) maneuvers. The first motorized regiment, *Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler*, was named in Nuremburg in September 1933, and motorized in 1934. It was the first unit to enter the Rhineland in 1936.

The *SS* desired to field combat units to compete with those of the new *Wehrmacht*, and in 1935 announced that an *SS* division would be raised from existing *SS-VT* units. In any event, it took several years before full motorized divisions were available. *Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler* was joined by three other regiment sized units: *Deutschland*, *Germania*, and *Der Führer* (raised in Austria after the German occupation in 1938). *LAH*, *Deutschland (D)*, and *Germania (G)* served in the Polish campaign in 1939. After the defeat of Poland, the German military began a major expansion and reorganization for the next phase of the war.

The SS motorized division *Totenkopf*, *SS-V* (formerly *SS-VT)*, and *Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler* took part in the French campaign. Afterward, the *SS* units were again reorganized. *LAH* was expanded to brigade strength, although it kept the *standarte* designation. A fourth *SS* division was formed and named *Germania*. *SS-V* was refitted and named *SS Division Deutschland*. In early 1941, *Germania* was renamed *SS Division Viking* and *Deutschland* became *SS Division Reich*. *LAH* was refitted (but not expanded) and renamed *SS Division Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler*.

The initial drive into Russia in 1941 was extremely successful, and all the *SS* motorized divisions were engaged, along with independent regiments. The severe fighting during the bitter first Russian winter led to very serious losses in men and equipment. Some *SS* units were virtually wiped out. The battered *SS* units were withdrawn, starting with *Reich* in March of 1942, followed by *LAH* and *Totenkopf*. *Viking* was reinforced in its position in Russia on the Mius River west of Sverdlovsk. By the end of 1942, all these divisions had been redesignated *SS Panzergrenadier Divisions*, and they now contained the armored units needed to make them strong independent assault formations.

Other *SS* divisions were created, among them *SS Division Nord* (never fully motorized), *SS Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Division Prinz Eugen* (*SS* Volunteer Mountain Division), *SS Panzergrenadier Division Hohenstaufen*, *SS Panzergrenadier Division Karl der Grosse* (Charles the Great), *SS Panzergrenadier Division Nordland*, and *SS Panzergrenadier Division Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth). The last four units, all destined to become full *SS Panzer Divisions*, were not ready for the great German summer offensive at Kursk. Thus *LAH*, *Das Reich*, and *Totenkopf* were the major *SS* units to fight in this pivotal battle.

During the rest of 1943, *Das Reich*, *Totenkopf*, *Viking*, and *Nordland* were all engaged on the Eastern Front. *LAH* was sent to Italy for refitting and training and its vehicle were distributed t the other units. *LAH* was then designated *1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler*. The collapse of the Korsun pocket in early 1944 nearly destroyed *Viking*, which was designated an *SS Panzer Division*, after losing most of its vehicles. Additional *SS* units, among them *9th SS Panzer Division Hohenstaufen* and *10th SS Panzer Division Frundsberg*, were committed to action and suffered heavy losses.

Other units forming in the West included *Hitlerjugend* and *Götz von Berlichingen* in France. *LAH* and *Das Reich* were sent there for refitting in anticipation of Allied landings on the French Coast. *Reichsführer SS* was in the Balkans with *Prinz Eugen*.

After the Allied landings at Normandy, *LAH*, *Das Reich*, *Hitlerjugend*, and *Götz V. Berlichingen* fought in France. Though initially successful in containing the Allied advance through the bocage country, *SS* units were soon on the defensive after the American breakthrough at St Lo. The *SS Divisions LAH*, *Das Reich*, and *Götz V. Berlichingen* took part in the attempted relief of the German forces trapped in the Falaise pocket. Although the "Falaise Gap" remained open long enough to save many experienced troops, the loss in vehicles was staggering. By the end of August 1944, *LAH* had no tanks left, while *HJ* had only ten and *Das Reich* had fifteen.

In late 1944, *Totenkopf* and *Viking* were on the Vistula River in Poland, fighting near Warsaw, being relieved in October. *Hohenstaufen* and *Frundsberg*, near Arnhem in Holland for rest and refitting, successfully defended the town from British paratroopers who had attempted to capture the Arnhem bridge over the Rhine river. *LAH* and *HJ* were refitted and committed to the first wave of the Ardennes offensive in December. *Das Reich* and*Hohenstaufen* were held in reserve. The offensive bogged down though *LAH* did make some progress. The American troops put up effective resistance at key points, and the snow and bad weather limited the mobility of German tanks in many areas. By the end of December, the offensive was called off, and the four *SS Pz Divisions* made a few final thrusts on Bastogne before Patton's Third Army broke through. *Das Reich* was about half strength and the other divisions were not much better.

In 1945, several *SS Panzer Divisions*, among them *Totenkopf*, *Viking*, *LAH*, and *HJ*, were gradually consumed in the several unsuccessful attempts to defend Hungary, and its capital, Budapest, from the advancing Russians. *Frundsberg* and *Hohenstaufen*, were also transferred to Hungary in March 1945, for one final offensive. When it, too, failed, these decimated divisions could only retreat under the pressure of strong Russian attacks. In April and May, the remaining *Waffen SS* formations surrendered, most of them in Austria and Czechoslovakia.

The vehicle tactical markings for units within the SS divisions followed the standard practice of the Army, as illustrated in *Panzer Colors II*. These markings were usually in White, though Black and Red were occasionally used on snow camouflaged vehicles. Vehicle numbering also followed Army practices and, again, most units were responsible for marking their vehicles.

Most *Waffen SS* armored units painted their formation signs in White, although *Das Reich* and *Viking* used the more common Yellow Ochre. Though there were a few similar markings that might have caused some confusion, most of these symbols were quite distinctive. As the war progressed, however, the formation signs were applied less and less frequently to combat vehicles.

The unit symbol for *Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler* underwent more changes than the symbols for any of the other divisions. No unit sign was carried in Poland. However, before the 1940 campaign in France, *LAH* carried a monogrammed script *LAH* on at least some vehicles. During the attack on France, *LAH* used its first tactical unit symbol. This first marking was a White skeleton key. The key alluded to the name of the unit commander, Josef "Sepp" Dietrich, *Dietrich* being the German word for key. The key marking usually was painted at an angle, pointing down to the left. Shortly after this, a thin Black outline of a shield was painted around the key. During the Balkans campaign, the shield was repainted in White. For BAR-

(Below Left) This passenger car of SS motorized division "SS-V" is seen during the invasion of France, 1940. There are no division markings, but the White tactical sign indicates that this vehicle is in the headquarters unit of the division's infantry regiment. The vehicle number is White, and the car is overall Dark Gray. (NARS)

(Below) A Kfz 11 Wanderer passenger car of "SS-V", showing the same markings except for the vehicle number "14". The large national flag draped over the hood is an air recognition marking. (Bundesarchiv)

BAROSSA, the shield outline was altered with a small cutout in the upper right corner. In 1942, the *LAH* symbol was changed again. The shield shape was painted with a round lower border. A wreath of oak leaves surrounded the shield on three sides. This commemorated the award of oak leaves to the Knight's Cross to "Sepp" Dietrich. In early 1943, the oak leaf wreath was shortened by eliminating the leaves along the sides of the shield. This symbol was then used by *LAH* until the end of the war, except for the Kursk offensive.

The unit symbol for *SS Division "Reich"* (later *SS PzGren. Div. Das Reich* and *2. SS Pz. Div. Das Reich*) was a *Wolfsangel* lying on one side, painted in Yellow Ochre. This sign was used through the war except for the Kursk operation and a short period afterward.

SS Division Totenkopf (later *SS PzGren. Div. Totenkopf* and *3. SS Pz. Div. Totenkopf*) used a skull (death's head), painted in White, as its divisional symbol. This sign was used during the entire war, though it wasn't as common from 1944 on. Like *LAH* and *Das Reich*, *Totenkopf* had a temporary sign for the attack on the Kursk salient (OPERATION CITADEL).

4. SS-Polizei PzGren. Div. used a *Wolfsangel* in the form of a *Z*, with a thick mark across the slanted bar, painted in White.

SS PzGren. Div. Viking (later *5. SS Pz. Div. Viking*) used a four-armed "sun wheel" painted in Yellow Ochre. Initially, the sign was painted alone on Dark Gray vehicles. On some Dark Yellow vehicles, the symbol was painted in White or Yellow Ochre on a circular Black background. Later, the "sun wheel" was painted inside a shield outline. The shield was pointed at the bottom and had a cutout at the upper right corner. This sign was generally in White. A variation had a smaller shield without the corner cutout.

(Above) Vehicles of Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler" during the invasion of Poland in 1939 show attempts to conceal the unit's identity. Note the overpainted license plates. The troops in the photograph have removed their "LAH" collar tabs as well. All of the markings are in White. (NARS)

(Right) License plates on many vehicles were painted by hand on flat plates. This motorcycle shows the shortlived "LAH" monogram used as a unit symbol by Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler". This marking was replaced before the invasion of France in 1940. (NARS)

(Right) A Ford three ton truck of Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler" drives through a town in the Balkans during the invasion of Greece in 1941. It carries the new "LAH" unit symbol used during the campaign in France. The White skeleton key was outlined by a Black pointed shield. The White tactical markings denote the 7th vehicle of the 4th company of the supply transport unit of the division. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below and Below Right) Two views of a light ambulance of the medical company of "LAH", showing the typical markings of German ambulances in armored units. The division sign is in White in a Black outline shield. The medical unit sign is also White, and the vehicle carries Red crosses in White circles. Note the convoy clearance warning, "Abstand 30 m" ("Stay back 30 meters"), painted in White. (NARS)

A SdKfz 231 and SdKfz 222 of Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler" cross open country during the invasion of Greece in 1941. The SdKfz 231 has the early 1941 version of the division key insignia. This is painted in White, including the shield outline, which is the same shape as the black shield used in France.

(Left) This SdKfz 222 presents a typical appearance of "LAH" vehicles in Greece. Overall color is a dust covered Dark Gray, with a vehicle name painted in Black on the side plate just below the turret. The Balkenkreuz national insignia and the White division sign are on the rear upper side plate. (NARS)

(Left) These vehicles of "LAH" show an interesting variation of the division sign. This variant dates from 1941, probably during training in France before the start of BARBAROSSA. The sign was probably applied with a stencil. Photographs indicate this sign was used for only a short period of time. (NARS)

(Below) This SdKfz 6 self-propelled 3.7cm Flak 37 halftrack is seen in Russia during BARBAROSSA. The markings, in White, denote the 2nd self-propelled Flak battery. The division sign is the standard design used by "LAH" during the invasion of Russia. Note the distance warning in White. (NARS)

This PzJag IB of "LAH" in Paris during 1942 carries the 1942 division sign in White. The long wreath was used only for a few months, perhaps from the beginning of 1942 to the winter of 1942-43. (Bundesarchiv)

These cars of a war correspondent's unit attached to Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler" carry the 1942 variant of the division sign. The shield around the key is rounded, and a wreath has been added to commemorate the award of oak leaves to the Knight's Cross of "Sepp" Dietrich, the division commander. (Bundesarchiv)

A White PzKpfw IV ausf G of "LAH", seen during the winter of 1942-43, does not have a division insignia, but does have turret numbers in Red and additional national insignia. Note the black smudges around the muzzle brake and coaxial MG34. (Bundesarchiv)

This heavy passenger car shows the 1943 style for the division insignia of "LAH". The wreath has been shortened to run below the shield. This sign was used by "LAH" for the rest of the war. Note the distance warning and the tactical sign for the 13th company of the motorized infantry regiment. (Bundesarchiv)

A snow-camouflaged PzKpfw II in Russia during the winter of 1942-43 carries the division sign in White on a patch of the Dark Gray base color. The turret numbers are Red. The White camouflage paint was temporary, and often wore off edges and rough surfaces fairly quickly. (Bundesarchiv)

Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler" began 1943 in Russia as a Panzergrenadier Division. These PzKpfw III ausf Ls are typical of the White camouflaged vehicles of "LAH" during this mid-war period. Again, the division signs in White are painted on patches of the Dark Gray base color. (NARS)

In 1944, Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler" was transferred to France to defend against the expected Allied invasion. This SdKfz 247 command vehicle has a base color of Dark Yellow oversprayed with Olive Green. The division sign is White, and the cover for the spare tire is Dark Gray. (Bundesarchiv)

The Panther battalion in "LAH" adopted some additional markings for at least some of the regimental command tanks. This Panther ausf A shows the most elaborate scheme. The initials "LSSAH" have been carved into the zimmerit on the side of the turret just in front of the angle in the turret side armor. Ahead of this is a unique diving panther insignia, in Black, Yellow, and White. The regimental number on the side skirt is Red and White. (Bundesarchiv)

These 4x2 passenger cars of SS Division "Reich" (later renamed "Das Reich") show the typical early war markings for this unit. The width markings are in White, as is the initial "G" (denoting Guderian's formation during the invasion of Russia). The "Reich" division sign, a "wolfsangel", is in Yellow Ochre. Note how dark this color is compared to the base color of Dark Gray. (Bundesarchiv)

(Left) A formation of armored cars of motorized division "Reich" carry the division sign in Ochre, blackout high-visibility markings in White, and the reconnaissance battalion tactical sign also in White. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below Left) The Russian spring rains brought nearly impassable roads, as this motorcycle crew is discovering. The cycle is overall Dark Gray with a very heavy coat of wet and dry mud. The division sign is Yellow Ochre. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below) In the spring of 1943, the new camouflage scheme of overall Dark Yellow was introduced. This PzKpfw IV ausf F2 has areas of the original Dark Gray showing, especially on the hull nose plate. Note that the division "wolfsangel" is painted in White for better contrast. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above) This VW type 82 Kubelwagen of SS Division "Totenkopf" is overall Dark Gray. The division symbol has been painted in White, probably without a stencil. "Totenkopf" used several variants of the symbol which differed in minor ways. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above right) A light passenger car of "Totenkopf" displays another variation of the division sign, also in White. Note the Red Feldpost stamps on the license plate. The stencilled marking denotes the 9th battery of a towed artillery unit. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) The White "Totenkopf" symbol is just visible on the front plate of this snow-camouflaged PzKpfw III in Russia. The side of the turret has been left in the Dark Gray base color as a background for the White turret number. This vehicle is "101", the tank used by the commander of the first battalion of the tank regiment. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below) This Panther ausf A of "Totenkopf" carries the division "death's head" sign in White. It was rare for Panthers to carry unit symbols later in the war. The turret number is White on a three color camouflage scheme. (Bundesarchiv)

A BMW motorcycle of SS Division "Wiking" displays the four-arm "sun wheel" division sign in White on the Dark Gray base color. The White "K" denotes von Kleist's battle formation during the invasion of Russia. (Bundesarchiv)

A PzKpfw III ausf J, seen in 1943, is overall Dark Yellow. The "Wiking" symbol is White on a Black disk. The turret numbers, covered with a heavy layer of dust, are Red with White outlines. (Bundesarchiv)

7. SS Freiwilligen Gebirgs Division Prinz Eugen used a Yellow Ochre sign consisting of an odaltune in a circular outline. This symbol was used in the early part of the Balkans campaign and up to mid-1943, when it gradually disappeared. *Prinz Eugen* served the war in Yugoslavia.

9. SS Pz. Div. Hohenstaufen used a White capital *H* with a sword raised up the middle of the letter. This sign was used during the whole war, but again, its use on vehicles was relatively uncommon by 1944.

10. SS Pz. Div. Frundsberg had at least three tactical signs. The most elaborate was a stylized *F* with an oak leaf and *Panzer* rhomboid superimposed. This sign was supplemented, and perhaps replaced, by two simpler devices, a capital *F* in White, and a *Panzer* rhomboid with the letter *F* inside it. The simpler signs were more widely used on vehicles.

11. SS Freiwilligen PzGren. Division Nordland used as a unit symbol a four-armed "sun wheel" virtually identical to that used by *Viking*. *Nordland's* sun wheel was in Black and was surrounded by a circular outlined border.

12. SS Pz. Div. Hitlerjugend adopted a variation of the *LAH* key and shield. The shield was pointed with an upper right cutout corner. A *sigrune* was superimposed over the key in the shield. Oak leaves below the shield completed the sign. This symbol was painted in White and was carried on tanks and other armored vehicles at least through the summer of 1944.

16. SS PzGren. Div. Reichsführer SS used two tactical unit symbols. The first sign was two Black *sigrunes* (ϟϟ) carried on its vehicles in Italy while the unit was still an assault brigade. In 1944, a new sign, painted in White, was adopted. It was three overlapped oakleaves surrounded by a wreath. This was based on *Reichsführer SS* Heinrich Himmler's uniform collar patch insignia.

This PzKpfw IV ausf H does not carry a division sign, but is typical of vehicles in 1944. The Dark Yellow base color has been oversprayed with Olive Green. By 1944, superior Allied air power led to regular use of heavy foliage for better camouflage. (Bundesarchiv)

Two Panthers of SS Panzer Division "Wiking" in Russia during 1944. The Panthers in "Wiking" carried distinctive camouflage schemes, especially the second company. The company numbers are Yellow with Black outlines. The color scheme is Dark Yellow and Olive Green. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above left) The Panthers in the first company of "Wiking" had a softer mottled color scheme. This Panther ausf A has White numbers on a base of Dark Yellow with Red Brown overspray. (Bundesarchiv)

A formation of Panthers of the fourth company of "Wiking", seen in Russia. This company has its own camouflage pattern, though not all the Panthers have multi-color paint schemes. Over a Dark Yellow base is a soft mottling of Red Brown with the heavy lines of Olive Green. The tank numbers are in White. (Bundesarchiv)

This Panther of the first company has a more elaborate oversprayed pattern of Red Brown on the Dark Yellow base color. Variations in these color schemes usually resulted from crews painting their own vehicles. The White numbers are fading, and are hand painted.

A close-up view of one of the second company's Panthers, showing the hard-edged color scheme of Olive Green over Dark Yellow. The Yellow and Black turret numbers were easy for the command tank crew to see, but not too conspicuous. The heavy layer of dried mud provides a more effective local camouflage. (Bundesarchiv)

17. SS PzGren. Div. Götz von Berlichingen used as its sign a shield with the mailed fist of the medieval knight after whom the division was named. This symbol was used to the end of the war, and was painted in White.

18. SS PzGren. Division Horst Wessel, formed in 1944, used as its symbol a stylized *SA* in the form of a lightning bolt and slashmarking inside a circle. The marking was White, and with the division name, commemorated one of the heroes of the *SA (Sturm Abteilung)*, whose volunteer members provided the cadre for forming this division.

I SS Panzerkorps Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler, because of its close association with *1. SS Pz. Div. LAH*, used a similar formation sign. The *PzKorps* symbol was a shield with the cutout corner, with two keys crossed inside, and the small wreath of oak leaves under the shield. The sign was in White and, on some vehicles, was painted on a Black background.

Several other SS formations existed, but most of these had relatively few armored vehicles. Many of these units were formed from ethnic volunteers from allied or occupied nations, and were not as well equipped as the larger German divisions. The markings for these units are illustrated in the color pages. Some of them are drawn only from survivor's descriptions, and may not have been used much at all, even on the few AFVs provided to these units.

Late in the war, standard SdKfz 251 halftracks were often used to tow antitank guns because of a shortage of self-propelled mounts. This vehicle carries the late version of the "Wiking" divisional symbol in White. The shield outline was added in 1944. The White tactical sign denotes the 14th motorized infantry company. (NARS)

(Above) These vehicles of "Prinz Eugen" are Dark Gray, and display the division sign in Yellow Ochre, with White tactical signs. The division sign appears White on these very clean vehicles, but this results from a high contrast print. (NARS)

(Above left) 7th SS Freiwilligen Gebirgs Division "Prinz Eugen" operated in Yugoslavia, and was equipped primarily with captured material. This French Char B heavy tank carries the division sign in Yellow Ochre on a base of Dark Gray. The turret number is White.(NARS)

(Left) Captured Russian vehicles also served with "Prinz Eugen" in Yugoslavia. This BA-10 armored car is overall Dark Gray with the division sign in Yellow Ochre. The White tactical symbol denotes the war correspondent detachment assigned to the division. (NARS)

(Below left) A column of French Hotchkiss H39 tanks of "Prinz Eugen" show the typical appearance of the division's combat vehicles. No unit signs are carried, and a coat of dust and mud covers the Dark Gray base color. The Balkenkreuz is a White outline to make it less conspicuous. (NARS)

(Below) This Hotchkiss H39 is painted overall White, which is covered with a layer of dust. Again, no division or unit symbols are displayed. Soot and stains from the engine compartment have darkened the paint on the rear. This tank has a modified cupola. (NARS)

This White camouflaged SdKfz 250 reconnaissance halftrack of 11th SS Freiwilligen Panzergrenadier Division "Nordland" carries the division sign in Black. This was very similar to the symbol for 5th SS Panzer Division "Wiking", but was enclosed in a circle. (Bundesarchiv)

A PzKpfw IV ausf H from the second battalion of the tank regiment of 12th SS Panzer Division "Hitler Jugend". This division's PzKpfw IVs had very crudely painted turret numbers in Red with White outlines. The camouflage scheme is Dark Yellow with oversprayed Olive Green. (Bundesarchiv)

This PzKpfw IV of "Hitler Jugend" still has some Red Brown on the side skirting, though the division was supposed to use only Olive Green in the summer of 1944. The turret number is Red and White, and the name "GERTI" on the cupola is also White. Note that the Balkenkreuz has been oversprayed with Olive Green. (Bundesarchiv)

Yet another pattern variation on a PzKpfw IV of "HJ". The Olive Green has been sprayed in a much more random fashion. The turret numbers are Red with very thin White outlines. (Bundesarchiv)

This VW Kubelwagen of "HJ" carries the division symbol in White and a distance warning, also in White. Note the heavy road dust and dirt on the vehicles. (NARS)

This PzKpfw IV of "HJ" in Normandy, has a heavy Olive Green overspray on a Dark Yellow base. The division sign on the front fender is White. (Bundesarchiv)

This derelict VW typ 166 Schwimmwagen carries the stencilled unit sign for 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Götz von Berlichingen". The division sign is White, as is the tactical sign (for the headquarters staff of a motorized pioneer company). (NARS)

This StuG III ausf G of 16th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Reichs fuehrer SS", seen in Italy during 1943, displays the early variant of the division sign in Black. The extra outline on the Balkenkreuz is also Black. (Bundesarchiv)

This SdKfz 222 armored car, in overall Dark Gray, has White markings for SS Kavallerie Brigade "Florian Geyer". The tactical sign is probably for a motorized reconnaissance unit, but it has been removed, and may have been from a previous unit assignment for this vehicle. (Bundesarchiv)

ϟϟ Unit Markings at Kursk

During the great German summer offensive against the Russian salient near Kursk, the markings of a number of German *Panzer Divisions* were changed in an attempt to deceive the Russians as to how many divisions the Germans had, and the true identity of these units. The three *SS Panzergrenadier Divisions* that fought in the epic Kursk battle all received new insignia, based on the numerical designations of the divisions. The signs consisted of a horizontal bar with one, two, or three vertical bars above. *1. SS PzGren. Div. LAH* used one vertical bar, *2. SS PzGren. Div. Das Reich* used two bars, and *3. SS PzGren. Div. Totenkopf* used three bars. On some vehicles, the horizontal bar was omitted, leaving only the vertical bars. Most of these signs were painted in White, but a number of vehicles in the new Dark Yellow color scheme had the markings in Black.

As mentioned, the deceptive markings were intended to disguise the actual number of units as well as their identity. For this reason, three Army *Panzer Divisions* also received temporary formation signs for Kursk. These signs, though painted in Black, matched the markings assigned to the three *SS Panzer Divisions*. It was hoped that the Russians would assume that each Army unit was a detachment or battle group from one of the corresponding *SS* Divisions. In the German front line before the attack, the three *SS Divisions* were: *LAH*, *Das Reich*, and *Totenkopf*. Continuing down the line toward the south were three Army *Panzer Divisions: 6th Pz. Div. 19th Pz. Div.*, and *7th Pz. Div.*

6th Panzer Division used the same symbol as *Totenkopf*, a horizontal bar with three vertical bars. Refer to the upper two photos on p. 22 of *Panzer Colors II*: These are views of *6th Pz. Div.* at Kursk. *19th Panzer Division* carried two vertical bars, apparently without a bottom horizontal bar. This was very similar to the sign used by *Das Reich*. *7th Panzer Division* used a horizontal bar with one vertical bar, identical to the sign for *LAH* except for the use of Black. It is not known how long these markings were used by the Army *Panzer Divisions*, but *Das Reich* was still carrying its Kursk symbol several months later in Northern Russia.

This late production PzKpfw III ausf M of 7th Panzer Division (Heer) carries the same temporary unit sign as 1st SS Panzergrenadier Division Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler". The sign is Black, and the turret numbers are Red with White borders. The base color is Dark Yellow with Red Brown overspray. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above right) The Kursk unit sign on this 7th Panzer Division SdKfz 251 ausf D is a variation of the symbol, with heavier strokes. Again, the unit symbol and tactical sign are in Black. It is apparent from the White paint and the snow that 7th Panzer Division used the "temporary" marking for some months after the Kursk battle. (Bundesarchiv)

The new Dark Yellow paint is already starting to wear off this SdKfz 231 armored car of 2nd SS Panzergrenadier Division "Das Reich". The temporary Kursk sign for this division is in White on a Black metal plate. (Bundesarchiv)

(Left) A French Panhard 178 armored car assigned to a "Das Reich" war correspondent unit carries the Kursk division symbol in White below the tactical sign for correspondents ("KB"—"Kriegsberich ter"). Overall color is Dark Yellow, with White skeleton crosses. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below) The distinctive Kursk markings were applied to all vehicles of the units which used them. A VW Schwimmwagen and a Ford three ton truck display the "Das Reich" marking in White. Both vehicles are Dark Yellow. Above the division sign on the Schwimmwagen is the tactical sign for the first company of the first tank battalion. (Bundesarchiv)

(Bottom right) A rear view of the same group of PzKpfw IVs shows the fading White division sign on the rear hull plate. Note the zimmerit paste applied to the rear turret skirting, and the overall Dark Yellow paint scheme. (Bundesarchiv)

"Das Reich" used the Kursk marking for many months after the summer campaign. Here, PzKpfw IVs are seen in Northern Russia during the winter of 1943-44, still displaying the White temporary sign. Note the double dust filters on the hull, just below the rear of the turret. (Bundesarchiv)

This PzKpfw III ausf L of 3rd SS Panzergrenadier Division "Totenkopf" has a variation of the basic Kursk temporary sign. Here the three upright strokes are in Black. The usual horizontal bar across the bottom has been omitted. There were variations of most divisional insignia, in color, style, and details. (Bundesarchiv)

This SdKfz 250 of "Totenkopf" also has the simplified Kursk sign, three upright bars in Black. The base color is Dark Yellow with a very light overspray of Red Brown. Jerricans of fuel are on the rear deck, as fuel supplies during a large offensive often became critical. (NARS)

A column of 6th Panzer Division vehicles, seen during the Kursk offensive. The PzKpfw III doesn't have a division insignia. The turret numbers are Black, and the color scheme is Olive Green over Dark Yellow. The SdKfz 250 has the division's Kursk symbol in White, and the same color scheme as the PzKpfw III. (Bundesarchiv)

This PzKpfw III, used by the commander of the second tank battalion of 6th Panzer Division, shows the division's temporary Kursk symbol, identical to that of "Totenkopf", painted in Black. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with Olive Green patterns. (U. Feist)

A column of 6th Panzer Division PzKpfw IVs, probably of the battalion headquarters company, again shows the division Kursk sign in Black. The 9th company markings were used by some units to denote headquarters companies. The color scheme is Dark Yellow. (Bundes archiv)

Grossdeutschland

Grossdeutschland was perhaps the most important single *Heer* (Army) armored formation. It was equipped and expanded throughout the war largely to counter the increasing strength of the *Waffen SS* armored units. From a single regiment in 1940, *Grossdeutschland (GD)* grew until, by early 1944, it was a full *Panzerkorps* with several divisions and independent regiments. By early 1945, most of the regiments had been expanded to form brigades and, finally, full divisions.

Grossdeutschland was formed in 1939. The core of this four-battalion infantry regiment came from the *Wachregiment Berlin*, a guard unit used largely for ceremonial purposes at public buildings and memorials. The rest of the troops for the new regiment came from all areas of Germany. The regiment thus was named *Grossdeutschland* (Greater Germany).

Inf. Rgt. GD was still reforming in September 1939, and did not take part in the attack on Poland, though plans had been made to use the regiment as glider borne troops during the assault. By the end of 1939, the regiment was fully equipped.

During the invasion of France in 1940, *Inf. Rgt. GD* fought under Guderian's *19th Armeekorps* and, later, under von Kleist's command. After the armistice with France, *GD* was refitted in Alsace and Burgundy. In August, the Green *Grossdeutschland* cuff band was issued. The unit was now a motorized formation.

Inf. Rgt. (mot.) GD engaged in the invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, and then participated in BARBAROSSA, the invasion of Russia, in June, as part of *2nd Panzerarmee*. Distinguishing itself in combat, *GD* was one of the German units to reach the area near Moscow. Following the harsh winter battles from Tula to Orel, *GD* served as an excellent fighting unit, but suffered heavy casualties, and underwent several reorganizations. In April 1942, the regiment was reorganized as a full motorized infantry division. Armored units were added for better support. These included an assault gun battalion and a tank detachment with one company of *PzKpfw IVs* and two companies of *PzKpfw IIIs*. *GD* fought several major engagements during 1942, ending the year near Rzhev west of Moscow. During battles in the Lutschessa valley, *GD* was greatly over extended and suffered very heavy casualties.

In 1943, after more heavy fighting in the area around Byelgorod, *Inf. Div. (mot.) GD* was reorganized and designated as *Panzergrenadier Division Grossdeutschland*. In fact, by mid-1943, *GD* was truly a reinforced full *Panzer Division*. The *Pz. Rgt. GD* had three battalions of tanks: *I Abt.* with Panthers, *II Abt.* with PzKpfw IVs and *III Abt.* with Tiger Is. Each *PzGren. Rgt.* had one battalion fully equipped with *Sdkfw 251* SPWs, and the reconnaissance and pioneer battalions were also fully armored. The assault gun battalion *(StuG. Abt. GD)* remained, and the artillery regiment had one battalion of S.P. guns.

PzGren. Div. GD fought at Kursk in OPERATION CITADEL, then operated north of Karachev in the Orel area. In September, Russian attacks forced *GD* and other units south across the Dnieper River. A series of bitterly fought battles ensued, and *GD* was sent to France for refitting. Returning to the Russian front, *GD* again suffered casualties through the spring of 1944. Several reorganizations followed.

In 1944, *Grossdeutschland* was expanded to a *Panzerkorps*, and smaller subsidiary units were expanded or reformed. The *PzGren. Div. GD* remained the heart of this new organization, but several divisions and brigades filled out the corps strength. Among these were *PzGren. Div. Brandenburg (BR)*, *Führer Begleiter Regiment (Führer Escort Regiment) (FBR)*, and the *Führer Grenadier Regiment (FGR)*. In later 1944, *FBR* and *FGR* were expanded to brigade size and then to full *Panzergrenadier divisions*, though they did not adopt the *Panzergrenadier* title. In addition, *Panzer Division Kurmark* was created in early 1945, and also served in *PzKorps GD*. All these units fought to the end of the war, suffering heavy casualties and eventually being destroyed by April and May, 1945.

Most of the various units in *Panzerkorps Grossdeutschland* were formed from existing units of *PzGren. Div. GD* and its replacement and training organization. They used variations of the *GD* basic symbol.

In 1939, *Inf. Rgt. GD* chose a solid White *stahlhelm* (steel helmet). This was originally intended for the regimental command vehicles, but soon appeared on vehicles in all units of the regiment. The White helmet remained the symbol for *PzGren. Div. GD* to the end of the war. Vehicles assigned to the divison HQ company displayed a Black line over the top border of the helmet, and occasionally the helmet was outlined in Black.

With the formation of *PzKorps Grossdeutschland*, the subsidiary units chose variations of the White helmet. *PzGren. Div. Brandenburg* used the same helmet symbol, but in Red. *Führer Begleit Regiment* used a Yellow helmet and *Führer Grenadier Regiment* used a Blue helmet. The formation sign for *PzGren. Div. Kurmark* isn't known, but it could very possibly have been a variation of the *Grossdeutschland* helmet emblem.

In 1940, *Inf. Rgt. GD* used a combination of color codes and geometric shapes around the basic White helmet to designate unit affiliations, signposts, and bivouac or assembly point signs. The colors followed the system described in *Panzer Colors II*. The geometric shapes denoted the number of each battalion: *I Bttn.*, a square; *II Bttn.*, a circle; *III Bttn.*, a triangle; *IV Bttn.*, a diamond; and the transportation column, a rectangle. From 1941 onward, the *GD* units used the standard system of unit tactical markings described in *Panzer Colors II*.

Two SdKfz 250 halftracks of the reconnaissance battalion of motorized infantry division "Grossdeutschland" are seen in 1942. They show the typical appearance of "GD" vehicles at this period of the war. Overall color is Dark Gray, and the markings are in White. On both vehicles, attempts have been made to smudge the White markings with mud.

This SdKfz 232 of the "GD" reconnaissance battalion carries a common variant of the division's White helmet symbol. A number of units in "GD" added a Black line over the top of the helmet. The White tactical sign denotes a motorized reconnaissance unit. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above Right) General Hasso von Monteuffel, the commander of "GD", is seen in a VW Schwimmwagen. The color scheme is Dark Yellow, the helmet is White with the top outlined in Black, and the command pennant is Black, White, and Red. (Bundesarchiv)

The markings on this SdKfz 250 denote the reconnaissance battalion's 2nd company. The tactical sign and the helmet are both White, on a Dark Gray base color scheme. Visible just below the side visor is a White windmill, an unofficial sign for the reconnaissance battalion of "GD". (U. Feist)

(Below Right) A well-known photograph of "GD" vehicles, this view shows the full array of markings applied to the unit's equipment. The markings, all in White, include the unit helmet symbol, motorcycle battalion tactical sign, company number (3), vehicle number (27), and blackout width markers.

(Below) A column of the reconnaissance battalion during 1942. The SdKfz 251 in front carries full unit markings for the 10th vehicle of the staff company of the "GD" reconnaissance battalion, in White. Note the White windmills below the visors on the two front vehicles. The base color of all these vehicles is Dark Gray. (Bundesarchiv)

This Panther ausf A of "Grossdeutschland" carries the markings of the tank regiment commander. The low visibility markings are in Black, and the color scheme is Dark Yellow with Olive Green mottling. A small Black "GD" helmet has been used to replace the "R" usually used for the regimental staff vehicles. (U. Feist)

Oberst (Colonel) Lorenz, the commander of Panzergrenadier Regiment "GD", is seen in his staff SdKfz 251/6 halftrack. The overall color is Dark Yellow with a heavy coating of mud and dust. Barely visible on the front plate is the White "GD" helmet emblem. The vehicle number (01) is White, and the command pennant is Gray with a White eagle. (NARS)

Colonel Lorenz' command Schwimmwagen carries the White "GD" helmet, completely outlined in Black. The vehicle is Dark Yellow with oversprayed Red Brown. The tactical sign denotes the headquarters staff of Panzergrenadier Regiment "GD", and is painted in Yellow Ochre, as is the title below the helmet, "PzGrenRgtGD". (Bundesarchiv)

Sturmgeschütz Units

The *Sturmgeschütz* (assault gun) was developed originally to provide German assault troops with a well armored self-propelled weapon suitable for heavy fire support against fortified targets. Shortages of German tanks, and the vast battles on the Russian front, with their gradual shift to the defensive, eventually led to the development of the assault gun as an effective antitank weapon. The *StuG III* was the most common assault gun design. It was considerably less complex and less expensive to build than a tank, and found to be easier to use from concealed positions because of its lower silhouette.

Assault guns were organized into separate *Abteilungen* (battalions). Many of these battalions were integrated into *Panzer Divisions* and, later, into *Panzergrenadier Divisions*. In some cases, assault guns equipped the divisional tank battalions because tanks were not available for every unit. Since assault guns were considered as artillery, they were not under the direct command of the tank forces *(Panzertruppen)*, even though the *StuG III* was one of the most heavily armored vehicles available.

During the French campaign of 1940, four batteries of *StuG IIIs* saw action: *StuG Batteries 640, 659, 660,* and *665*. Each battery had six assault guns, each mounting a 7.5cmL/24 howitzer, and support troops. From this small beginning the assault gun units expanded until, by 1943, they were a major part of the German armored formations.

In 1941, the first assault gun battalions *(StuG Abteilungen)* were formed. Each battalion consisted of a headquarters battery and three batteries of six assault guns each. There were no assault guns in the battalion HQ battery, the battalion commander (known as the *Chef)* used a *Sdkfz 250* SPW as a command vehicle. In 1942, the number of guns in each battery was increased to nine (3 sections of 3 vehicles each), totaling 27 assault guns in the battalion. At the end of 1942 one additional assault gun was added to each battery for the *Chef* to use as a command vehicle, resulting in thirty guns to a battalion. In 1943, one *StuG III* was assigned to the battalion HQ battery for the battalion CO. This thirty-one vehicle assault gun formation became the standard for the rest of the war.

In 1943, the assault gun battalions were redesignated as assault gun brigades *(StuG Brigade)*. This was a "paper" change — there were no changes in organization or equipment. In 1944, a few assault gun brigades were reinforced by increasing the complement of assault guns to 45 per brigade (3 in brigade HQ battery and 14 in each of 3 batteries). In addition, there was a 4th battery with motorized infantry and pioneers. This provided a more balanced formation — the infantry and pioneers were able to support the assault guns and make them even more effective.

The assault gun battalions assigned to *Panzer Divisions* and *Panzergrenadier Divisions* carried the unit symbols for those divisions. Some battalions carried their own signs, such as the greyhound shield of the *228th Panzerjäger Abteilung* (tank destroyer battalion) of *116th Panzer Division*.

Assault gun battalions not integrated into *Panzer Divisions* or other formations usually were held at corps or army level and allocated to divisions or battle groups as they were needed. Many of these battalions, and the later brigades, painted their own insignia on their vehicles.

Numbering of assault guns included a wide variety of practices. Some of the early batteries painted names on the vehicles, as there were only six guns per battery. Some battalions used letters to identify the batteries, or letter-number combinations to identify the battery and vehicle position. Numbering systems used one or two digits to identify the vehicle and battery or section. From late 1942 onward, many battalions began adopting the standard three-digit marking scheme used for tanks, and this became a standard practice by 1944. Vehicles assigned to *Panzer* or *Panzergrenadier Divisions* generally followed the markings system by the main formation.

A StuG III ausf D of 177th Sturmartillerie Abteilung (Assault Artillery Battalion) during the winter of 1941-42 in Russia; the vehicle is Dark Gray and carries the unit insignia on the side plate. Note the chassis number chalked on the front plate, and the national flag on the rear deck. (Bundesarchiv)

This SdKfz 252 ammunition carrier of 166th StuArt Abt is overall Dark Gray with a national flag as an air recognition device. The unit emblem is painted on both the halftrack and the ammunition trailer. Note the leather headrest cushions on the open roof hatches. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above) This StuG III of 191st StuArt Abt, seen during the invasion of Greece and the Balkans, has an overall Dark Gray color scheme with the battalion's charging bull emblem on the side plate. Dust has obscured the emblem, which was a common occurrence. The narrow Black and White cross has been retained from the French campaign. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above Left) This trailer of the 191st Sturmartillerie Abteilung is overall Dark Gray with a unit emblem and tactical markings. The unit emblem is a Red charging bull on a Black rectangle with a Red outline. The tactical marking is Yellow Ochre, as is the unit designation "StuArt.Abt.191". The "2.Z." marking is White, and denotes the 2nd battery of the battalion. (Bundesarchiv)

These two views of a StuG III ausf F of 191st StuG Abt (Assault Gun Battalion) show a typical 1943 color scheme. The base color is Dark Yellow with an oversprayed pattern of Olive Green lines. The unit emblem is painted on the front mudguard flap in Red, and again on the side plate in Dark Yellow inside a Red rectangle. It was common for units to simplify or tone down colorful unit insignias in order not to compromise their camouflage, though some formations did retain conspicuous symbols up to the end of the war.

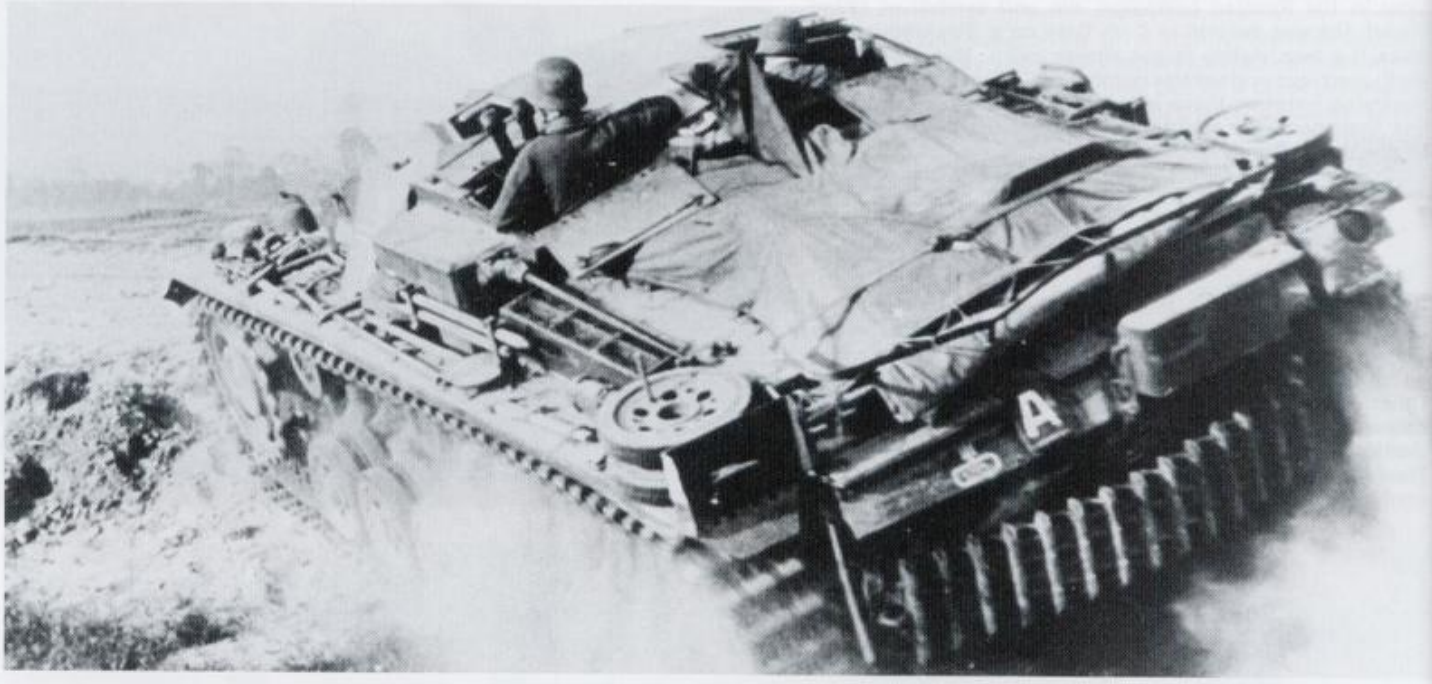
This StuG III ausf D of 192nd StuArt Abt is seen in Russia during BARBAROSSA. Overall color is Dark Gray, still fairly clean at this point. The markings are all White. The death's head is the unit emblem, and the vehicle number is "1", painted in a serif style. (Bundesarchiv)

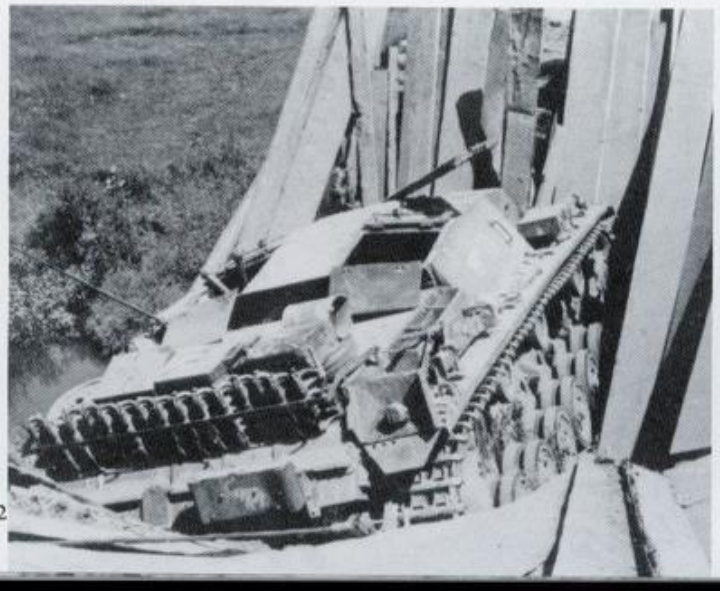
Later in the Russian campaign, the unit symbol of 192nd StuArt Abt was painted in Dark Gray on a Black square, to make it a less visible target aiming point. Note the White width markings and vehicle number "25". Since there was no traversing turret on these assault guns, the crews often carried their personal effects and additional supplies on the engine deck. (Bundesarchiv)

Assault gun "33" also carries the low visibility Dark gray unit death's head emblem and White number and width markings. The foliage is intended to break up the vehicle's silhouette to confuse Russian gunners. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above) A StuG III of 203rd StuG Abt (Assault Gun Battalion) carries the tactical sign for a self-propelled gun unit in White. Inside the tactical sign is the designation of the battery, "3/203". The vehicle number and width markings are also White. (Bundesarchiv)

A StuG III of the battalion's first battery carries a White "A" to iden tify the unit, a common method of marking artillery units. Assault gu formations were considered artillery units. The White tactical sig has the battery designation "1/203" inside. (Bundesarchiv)





This StuG III of 203rd StuG Abt seems to be the victim of overly op timistic engineering. Many heavy armored vehicles broke through makeshift bridges. This vehicle carries the battalion's emblem, a elephant painted in White, on the rear smoke grenade box, and also on the side plate. The vehicle number is also in White. (NARS)

Panzergrenadier Division Markings

3. PzGren. Div.

10. Inf. Div. (mot.)

10. PzGren. Div.

15. PzGren. Div.

PzAbt 115

PzGrRgt 129

PzGrRgt 104

16. PzGren. Div.

"Windhund"

16. Inf. Div. (mot.)

18. PzGren. Div.

20. Inf. Div. (mot.)

20. PzGren. Div.

22. PzGren. Div.

"Luftlande"

25. PzGren. Div.

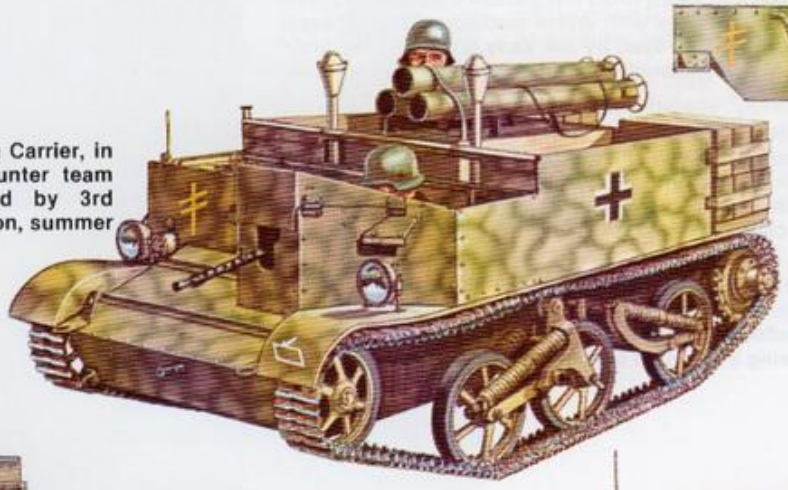
60. PzGren. Div.

90. PzGren. Div.

Pz. Gren. Div.

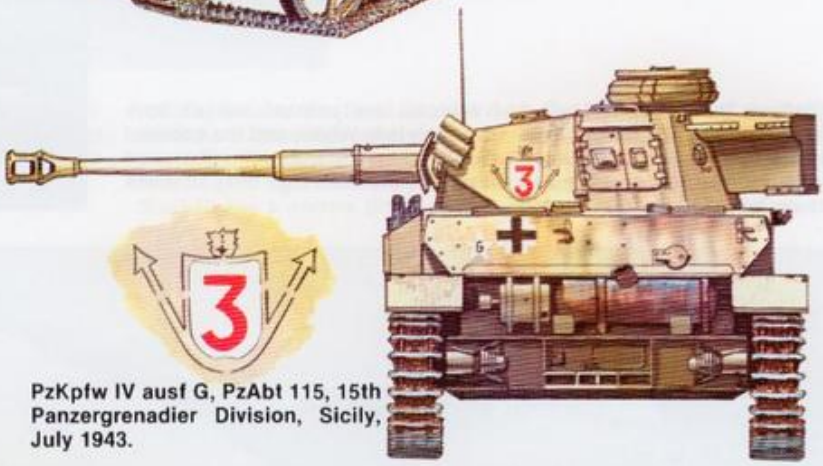
"Feldherrnhalle"

Rear Markings



Converted British Bren Carrier, in use as a light tank-hunter team infantry carrier. Used by 3rd Panzergrenadier Division, summer 1944.

PzKpfw III ausf J, 16th Panzergrenadier Division, Russia, 1943.



PzKpfw IV ausf G, PzAbt 115, 15th Panzergrenadier Division, Sicily, July 1943.

PzKpfw IV ausf H, PzAbt 190, 90th Panzergrenadier Division, Italy, 1944.

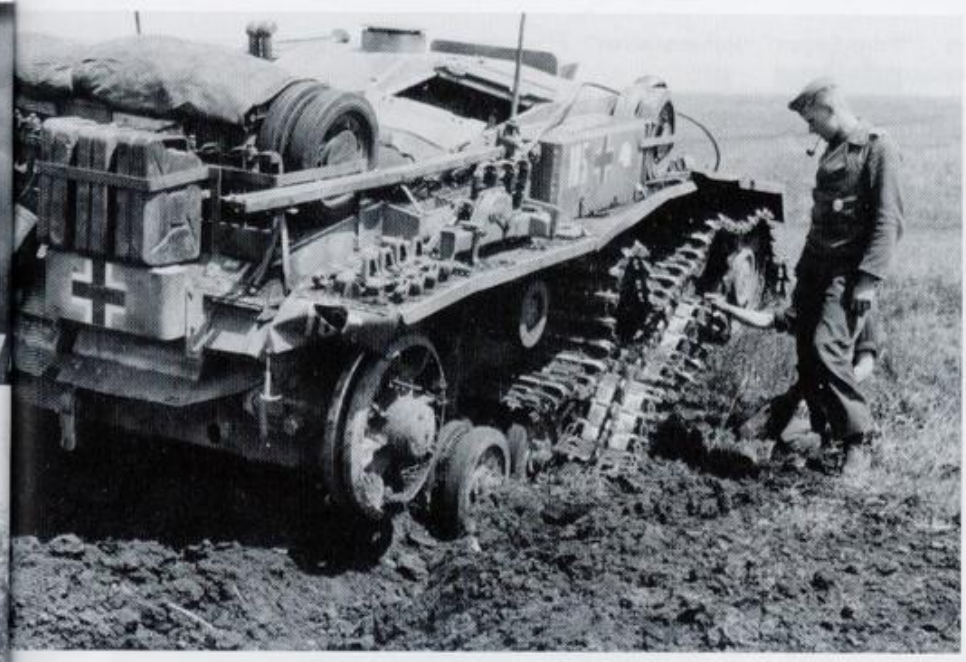
Three StuG III ausf Fs of 209th StuG Abt wait outside a village in Russia. The vehicles are painted overall White, with patches of the Dark Gray base color left around the markings. The unit emblem is a Red stencilled devil's head on a Yellow Ochre shield. The Black "A" denotes the first battery. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above Right) A StuG III of 243rd StuG Abt passes a burning Russian KV-1. The StuG III is Dark Gray with White markings. Though heavy tanks were occasionally destroyed by the early StuG IIIs, the short 7.5cm howitzer was not generally effective against well armored vehicles. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) The 243rd StuG Abt adopted as its unit symbol a mounted knight. This was painted in White inside an outlined shield. Each battery in the battalion used a different playing card symbol inside the shield: HQ — spade; 1st battery — heart; 2nd battery — diamond; and 3rd battery — club. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) The 243rd emblem is painted in White on this Dark Gray SdKfz 252 halftrack ammunition carrier. On the nose plate is the tactical sign for a self-propelled gun unit, with the number "243" just below it. The halftrack is towing a standard ammunition trailer. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below) These 243rd StuG Abt vehicles are painted overall Dark Yellow. The unit mounted knight emblem is in White, and the national insignia is Black and White. The national insignia is partly obscured with dust and mud, and many crews left the markings dirty to make them less visible. (Bundesarchiv)



(Above) Refueling an armored vehicle in the field was often a tedious process. This StuG III of 286th StuG Brig is being refueled by a soldier operating a wobble pump mounted on a fuel drum. The StuG III is overall Dark Yellow, with a solid coat of mud on the side skirts. The unit emblem is Black crosses outlined in White on a Yellow background, with a Black outline.

(Above Left) This StuG III of 259th Sturmgeschütz Brigade (Assault Gun Brigade), seen in Russia, 1944, carries the unit marking in Black, White, and Red, with a Black vehicle number. The overall color is Dark Yellow. Units usually performed their maintenance functions out in the field. (U. Feist)

(Above) This StuG III ausf F of "Grossdeutschland" has been disabled by an antitank mine. The overall color is Dark Yellow with a light mottling of Olive Green. The "GD" helmet is White, as is the vehicle number, denoting the 5th vehicle, 1st battery. (U. Feist)

(Below) This is the StuG III ausf G of the commander of the "GD" StuG Abt. The color scheme is a very heavy mottling of Olive Green over a Dark Yellow base. Very little of the base color can still be seen. In common with most "GD" command vehicles, the helmet on this StuG III has a narrow Black outline over the top edge. (U. Feist)

Waffen SS Panzer Division Markings

"Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler"

1939-40 | 1940 | 1941 | 1941-42 | 1942 | Kursk | 1943-45

"Das Reich"

1942-45 | Kursk

"Totenkopf"

1942-45 | Kursk | Kursk

"Polizei"

1942-44

"Wiking"

1941-42 | 1941-42

"Wiking"

1942 | 1943-44 | 1944-45

"Prinz Eugen" "Hohenstaufen"

1941-43 | 1944

"Frundsberg"

1944 | 1944 | 1944

"Nordland"

1942 | 1943-45

"Hitlerjugend"

1944

"Reichsführer SS"

1943 | 1944

"Götz von Berlichigen"

1944

"Horst Wessel"

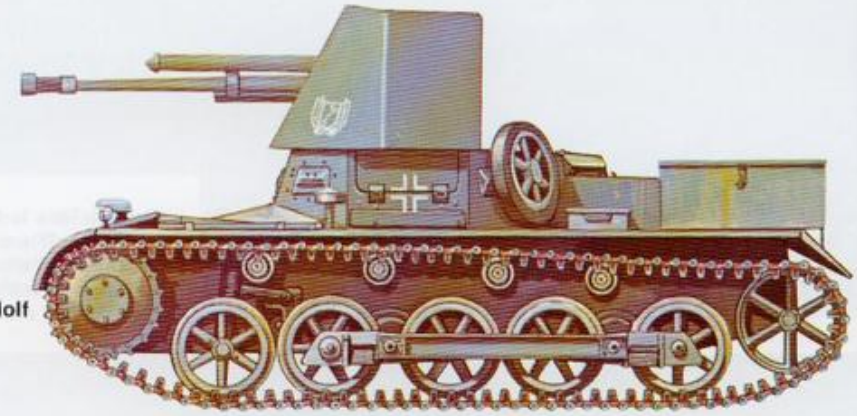
1944-45

"Nederland"

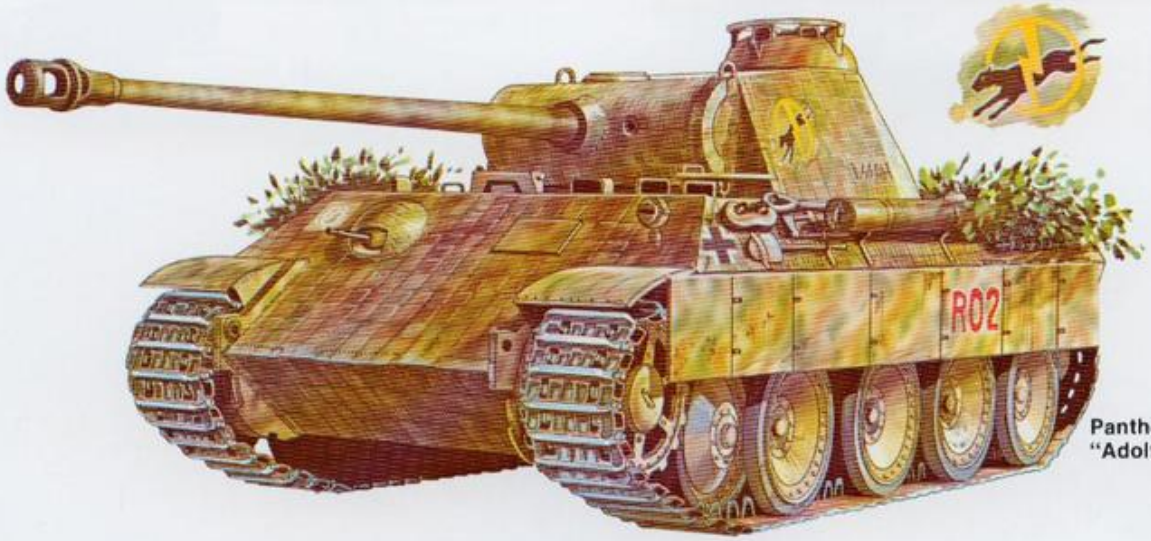
1944

"Wallonien"

1944



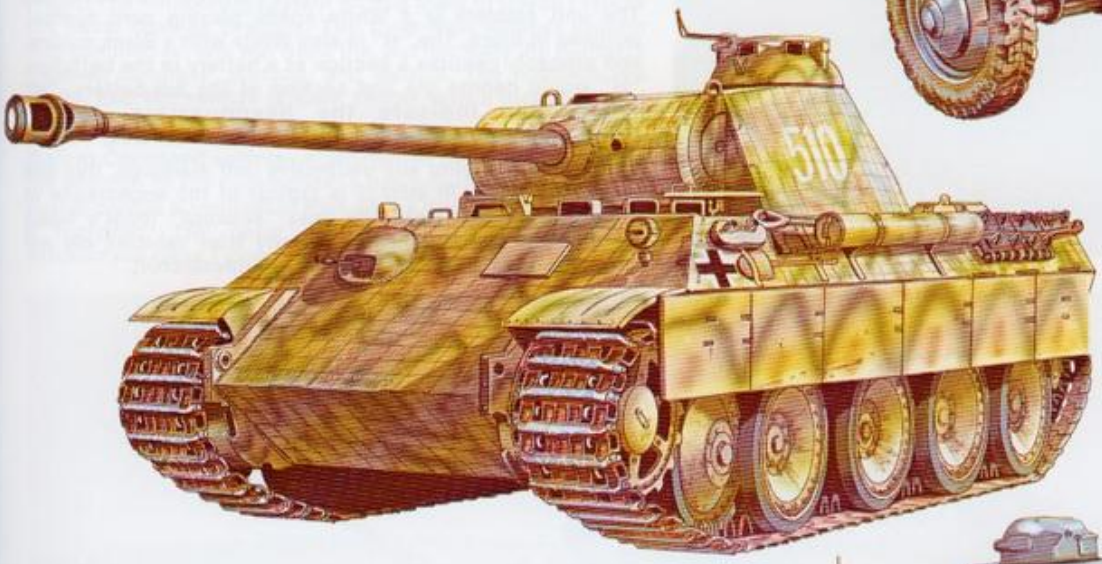
PzJag IB, Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler", France, 1942.



Panther ausf A, Leibstandar "Adolf Hitler", France, 1944.

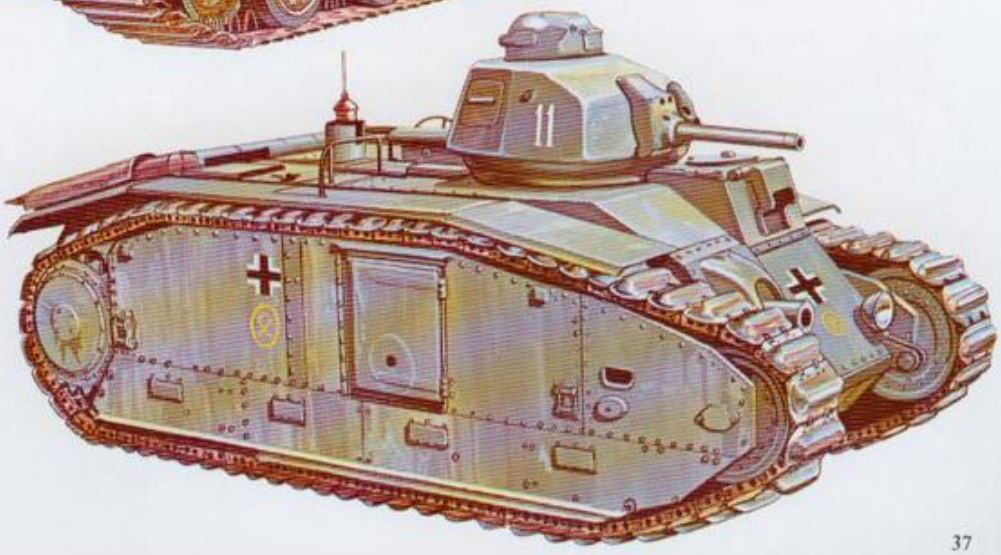
SdKfz 10/5 self-propelled flak half-track, Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler", Russia, 1941.

Kubelwagen of "Totenkopf", Russia, 1941-42.



Panther ausf A, "Wiking", Russia, 1943.

Char B bis, "Prinz Eugen", Yugoslavia, 1942.



This StuG unit has not been identified, but it operated in no thern Russia. The color scheme is overall Dark Yellow. Th unit emblem is a Yellow Ochre elongated "X" on a Blac background with a White outline. This photo is from the lat spring of 1953: note the Dark Gray SdKfz 9 halftrack (Bundesarchiv)

This rear view of another StuG III of the same unit shows th unit emblem in greater detail. Though still relatively clear this vehicle already shows the staining and dust coating tha are found on operational vehicles. Note the tool and equip ment stowage on the mudguards and rear hull sides an deck. (Bundesarchiv)

This StuG III ausf G is also from an unidentified StuG Ab The unit emblem is a White spade playing card symbo outlined in Black. The "H" is also White with a Black outline and probably denotes a section of a battery in the battalion "H" would denote the 2nd section of the 3rd battery. "H could also indicate the headquarters sectio ("hauptquartier" — "headquarters"). (Bundesarchiv)

Though not carrying any distinctive unit markings, this lat production StuG III ausf G is typical of the appearance o late-war vehicles. Note the cast "saukopf" (boar's head mantlet and zimmerit coating. Many later vehicles did no carry the distinctive unit insignia. (Bundesarchiv)

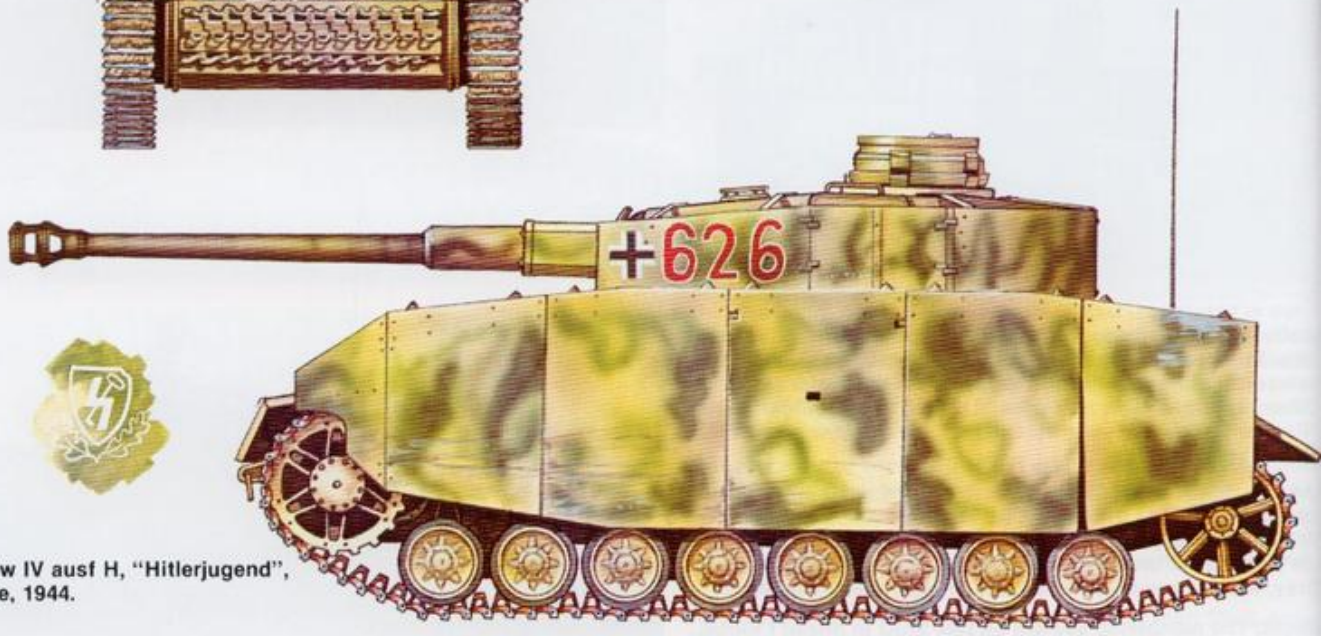
(Above) Vehicle numbering or designation took several forms. This StuG III carries a vehicle name. Many vehicles were named for animals, with the great cats a particular favorite. Other vehicles in this unit were "Loewe" (Lion), "Tiger", and "Panther". Vehicles were also named for cities or provinces. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above right) Other StuG formations adopted numbering systems similar to those used by Panzer Divisions. This StuG III ausf D in Russia carries a two-digit code denoting the vehicle number in the battalion. Overall color scheme is Dark Gray, with a narrow White outline cross. (Bundesarchiv)

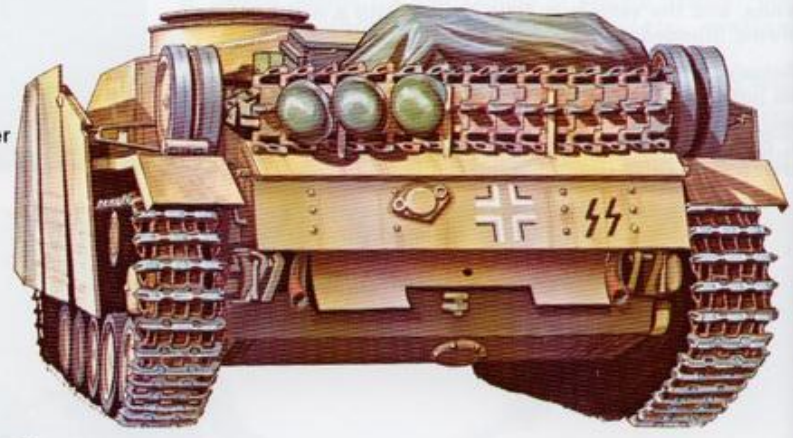
(Right) The numbering system on this StuG III doesn't follow the usual German practice. The three-digit number system was common on late war StuG IIIs, but normally the numbers denoted company, platoon, and vehicle. The numbers are White, and the vehicle is Dark Yellow with a mottle of Red Brown. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below) Command vehicles often carried pennants to identify the position of the commander's headquarters. This StuG III ausf G carries a pennant in Pink with a Black cross to denote a battalion. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with oversprayed Olive Green. (Bundesarchiv)

PzKpfw III ausf J, "Wiking", Russia, 1943.



PzKpfw IV ausf H, "Hitlerjugend", France, 1944.



StuG III ausf G, "Reichsfuehrer SS", Italy, 1943.

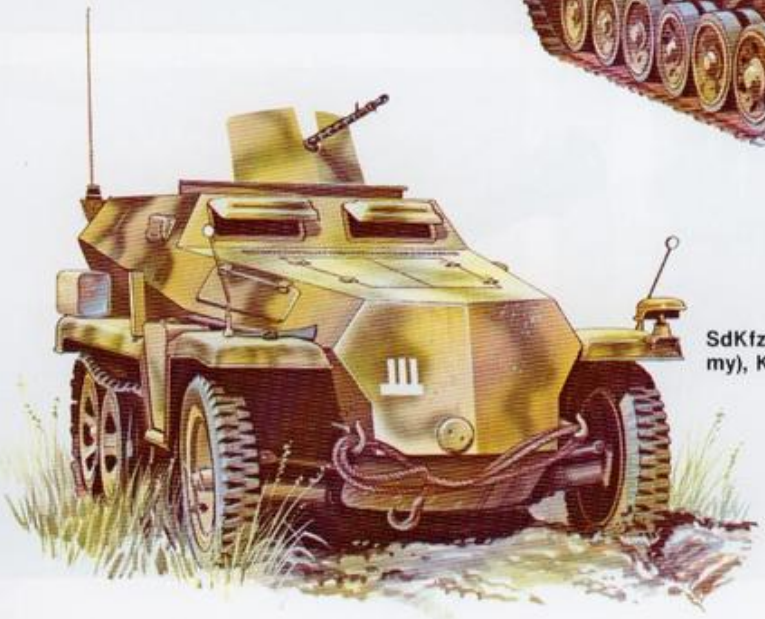
Volkswagen Kubelwagen, "Hitlerjugend", France, spring of 1943.

SS Markings at Kursk, 1943

SdKfz 251 ausf D, 7th Panzer Division (Army), Kursk, 1943.

PzKpfw IV ausf H, "Das Reich", Russia, 1943.

PzKpfw III, "Totenkopf", Kursk, 1943.



SdKfz 250, 6th Panzer Division (Army), Kursk, 1943.

(Above) This StuG III is a very interesting vehicle. It is an early production ausf G which has been upgraded with late-war modifications such as a coaxial MG in the gun mantlet. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with an oversprayed pattern of Red Brown. The vehicle number and cross are Black. Note the lighter area around the Red tactical sign. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) In 1944, orders were issued that all armored formations were to adopt the three-digit numbering system used in Panzer Divisions. This StuH 42, seen in Russia, carries Red numbers with White outlines. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below Right) StuG crews destroyed many enemy tanks, and victory markings were similar to those used by tank and gun crews. This StuG III ausf G displays 18 White kill rings on the barrel of the StuK 40 gun. Note the rough zimmerit finish under the Dark Yellow and Red Brown color scheme. (U. Feist)

This Sturmhaubitze 42 ausf G (StuH 42) belongs to the same unit as the StuG III above. The color scheme is the same, but the barrel and muzzle brake appear to be unpainted steel, probably a dark rust-gray color. The upper side plate has been painted in a light color, perhaps lightened Dark Yellow or Light Gray, as a background for the markings. The tactical sign, denoting the headquarters of the tank destroyer battalion of a Panzer Division, is in Red. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above) This rear view of another "LAH" StuG III shows the markings carried on the rear hull. The small "bull's eye" is on the left mudguard stowage box in White, and the "LAH" key insignia is on a metal plate, also in White. Next to the key is a White tiger's head, probably an unofficial unit sign or a crew marking. (NARS)

(Above Left) Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler" had a Sturmartillerie company. This StuG III ausf A, seen in France, is overall Dark Gray. The small "bull's eye" emblem is White, as is the narrow national cross. (NARS)

(Left) StuG units attached to Waffen SS divisions at Kursk used the same temporary division signs. This StuG III of 2nd SS PzGren Div "Das Reich" carries the division's Kursk sign in White and a White tactical sign for the 3rd company of the assault gun battalion. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with a Red Brown overspray. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below Left) 3rd SS PzGren Div "Totenkopf" also had StuG IIIs. This vehicle carries the division's temporary Kursk sign in White. The color scheme is Dark Yellow and Red Brown. This vehicle is an early production version with bolted front armor. (U. Feist)

(Below) Another group of "Totenkopf" StuG IIIs, showing a variant of the division sign carried in White. It was not uncommon for the horizontal bar to be left off. After seeing several days of heavy action, these vehicles are covered with mud and dust. The color scheme is Dark Yellow and Red Brown. (Bundesarchiv)

Sturmgeschutz Unit Markings

StuGAbt

177

StuGAbt

184

StuGAbt

185

StuGAbt

189

StuGAbt

190

StuGAbt

191

StuGAbt

192

StuGAbt

197

StuGBrg

201

StuGBrg

202

StuGBrg

203

StuGBrg

209

StuGBrg

210

StuGAbt

226

StuGBrg

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StuGBrg

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StuGBrg

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StuGBrg

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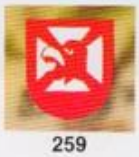
StuGBrg

245

StuGBrg

249

StuGBrg

259

StuGBrg

261

StuGBrg

277

StuGBrg

278

StuGBrg

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StuGBrg

286

StuGBrg

287

StuGBrg

301

StuGBrg

322

StuGBrg

341

StuGBrg

393

StuGBrg

666

StuGBrg

667

StuGBrg

901

StuGBrg

912

StuGBrg

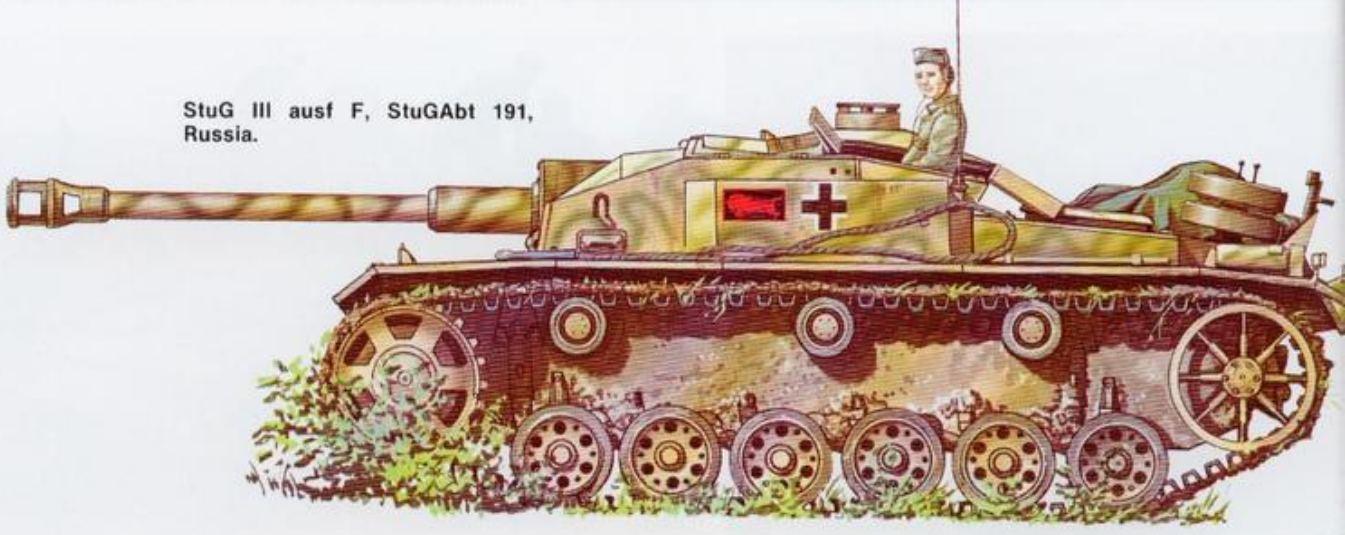
"GD"

StuGBrg

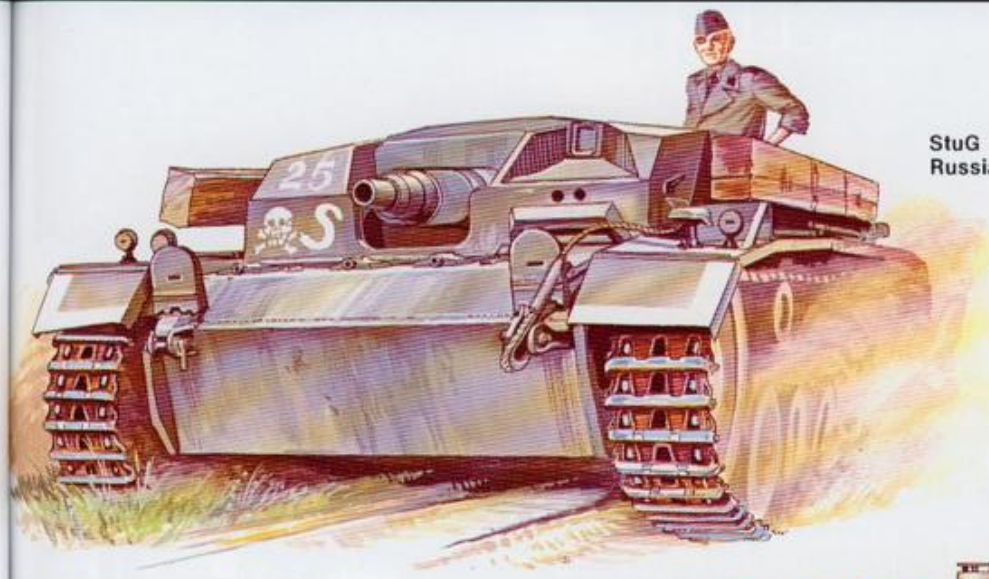
"Panzer Lehr"

"Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler"

(StuG Company)

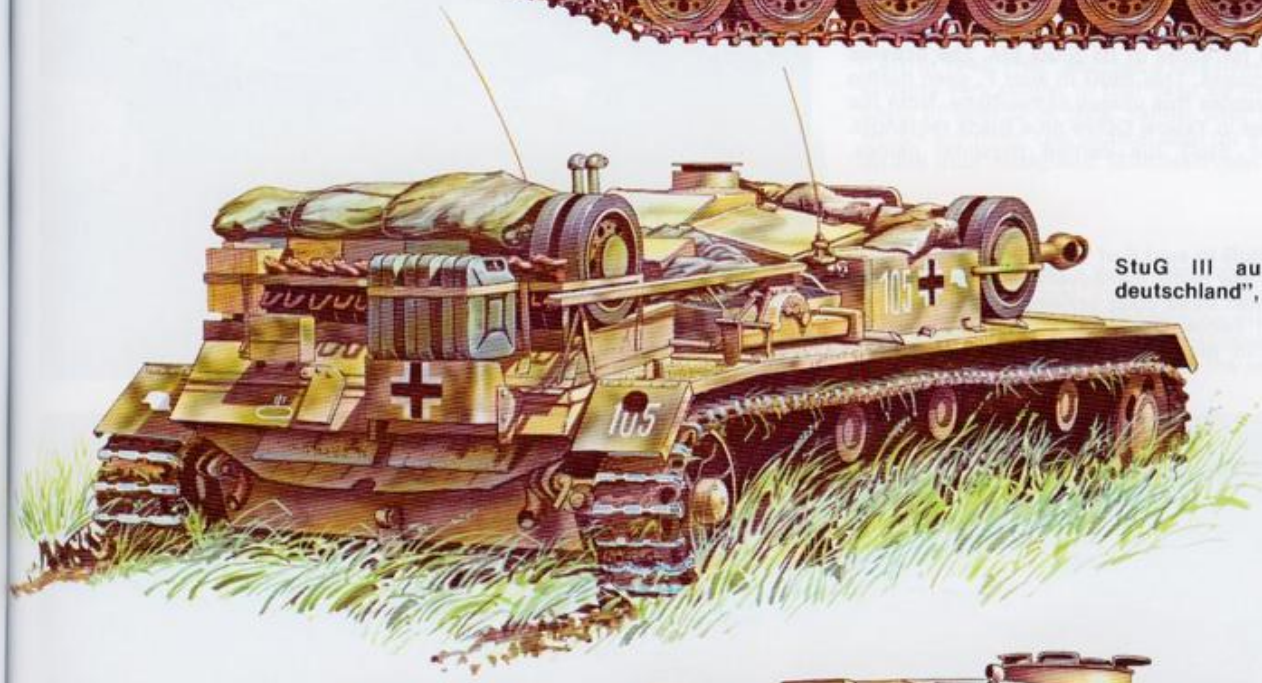


StuG III ausf F, StuGAbt 191, Russia.



StuG III ausf D, StuGAbt 192, Russia, 1942.

StuG III ausf F/48, StuGBrig 243, Russia, 1943-44.



StuG III ausf F/48, "Gross-deutschland", Russia, 1943.

StuH 42 ausf G, unit unknown, Russia, 1944.

This StuG III ausf F8 of "Hermann Goring" Panzer Division, seen in Italy, is typical in appearance for "HG" vehicles in 1943. The overall color is Dark Yellow, with a Black "D" denoting the section — probably the 1st section, 2nd battery. "HG" did not have a 4th battery in the III (StuG) battalion. (Bundesarchiv)

"Hermann Goring" adopted a complex dappled three color camouflage scheme for some of its StuG IIIs. The scheme was applied with sponges. This StuG III ausf F, seen during war games in Italy, carries this unique camouflage. Note the name "ULLA" painted in Yellow Ochre on a Black rectangle. A number of "HG" StuG IIIs carried personal names. (Bundesarchiv)

"GERDA", another StuG III ausf F of "HG", is used as an umpire's vehicle during war game maneuvers. Also carrying the dappled sponge-applied three color scheme, this vehicle has the name painted in Yellow Ochre on a Black background. The foliage serves to break up the vehicle's silhouette. (Bundesarchiv)

Another StuG III ausf F of "HG", seen in 1943, is overall Dark Yellow with a Black section letter "A". Note the wire cage mounted over the gunner's hatch sight opening, and the framework for the spare tracks on the rear deck. (Bundesarchiv)

(Left) In 1944, "HG" adopted a very heavily applied three color scheme very similar to that seen on the previous page. This StuG III ausf G is Dark Yellow with Olive Green and Red Brown mottling. The tactical sign for a StuG unit is in White on the front mudguard. (Bundesarchiv)

This StuG III shows a very heavy application of Olive Green and Red Brown over the Dark Yellow. Hardly anything remains of the base color. In common with many StuG III units, this "HG" vehicle carries considerable stowage on the engine deck, where it was out of the way. (Bundesarchiv)

"Grossdeutschland" Markings

SdKfz 232 (8 rad), "Grossdeutschland", Russia, 1943.

Grossdeutschland Variations

SdKfz 250/1, "Grossdeutschland", Russia, 1942.

Panther ausf A, PzRgt "Grossdeutschland", Russia, 1944.

SdKfz 251/1 ausf C, "Grossdeutschland", Russia, 1943.

Grossdeutschland Variations

PzKorps "Grossdeutschland" Insignia:

PzGr. Div. "Brandenburg"

"Fuhrer Begleit" Rgt.

"Fuhrer Grenadier" Rgt.

Tiger Tank Battalions

The introduction of the *Pzkpfw VI Tiger I* heavy tank provided a dramatic improvement in the power of German armored formations. Both because of the real technical advantages of the Tiger I, and the propaganda advantages of creating "elite" units in the *Panzertruppen*, the Tiger was assigned to special heavy tank battalions *(schwerer Panzer Abteilungen-sPzAbt.)*. These were to be held at army or corps levels and assigned as needed to reinforce other units during a campaign. Only a few divisions ever received organic Tiger battalions. These included *11. SS PzGren. Div. Nordland*, which had an *SS Tiger battalion* assigned to it, *sSS PzAbt. 503* of *III SS PzKorps*.

Many of the Tiger battalions had distinctive insignia and markings. Indeed, because these units were often moved from one location to another, and supported different divisions at different times, their camouflage and markings were more varied than most of the armored formations. It should be noted that many units did not apply battalion symbols to the Tiger tanks themselves. Often these signs were used on support vehicles, road signs, and bivouac sign posts. Those units which did mark their Tigers seem to have abandoned the practice by the end of 1944. In some cases, markings were just overpainted and not restored.

Since it has been possible to identify vehicles of most of the Tiger battalions, each battalion is detailed, including the development of the camouflage and markings applied to the vehicles, concentrating on the Tigers themselves.

sPzAbt. 501 was the first Tiger unit to arrive in North Africa. The battalion symbol was a stalking tiger in Yellow Ochre and Black. Some vehicles also displayed a Red Panzer rhomboid with a script *S* inside (indicating *schwere* — heavy tank unit). *sPzAbt. 501* used the standard three digit vehicle numbering system. The three digit turret numbers in Africa were quite large, and painted in Red with White borders. The early Tiger Is delivered to *sPzAbt. 501* in Africa were overall Sand Brown. Later, however some were painted Light Olive Green, which was more suited to the grassy hills of Tunisia in the spring of 1943. The *PzKpfw III* ausf Ns of this unit also carried the battalion tiger emblem and used the three digit numbering system.

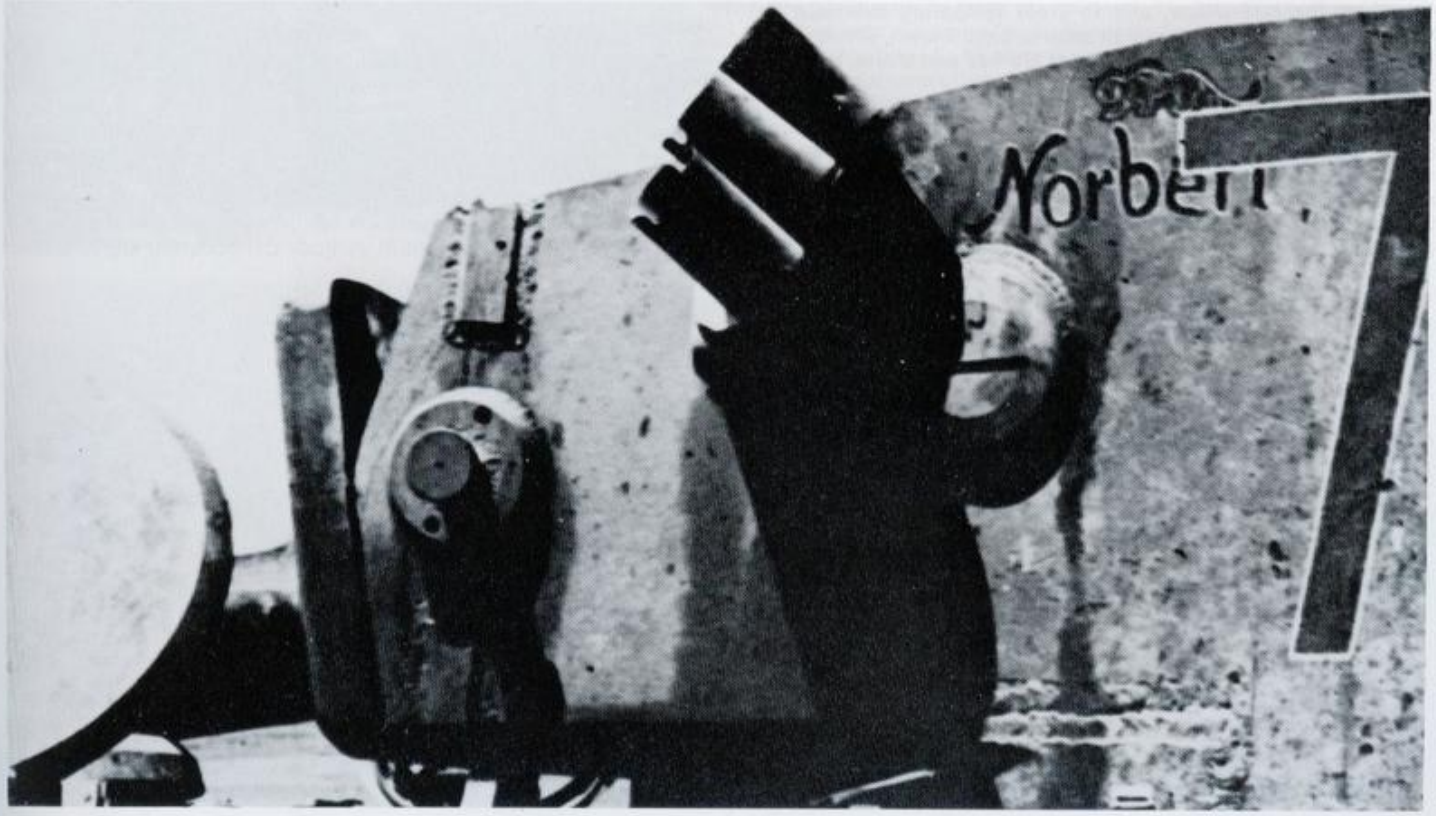
After being destroyed in North Africa *sPzAbt. 501* was reformed in 1943 around a cadre of personnel who had not gone to North Africa. It served in Poland and in the defensive battles in the Eastern sector near Gorodok and Vitebsk. In the winter of 1943-44, the Tiger Is of *sPzAbt. 501* were roughly snow camouflaged over the *zimmerit* coating, and crude three digit turret numbers were painted in Red. In the summer of 1944, *sPzAbt. 501* received the new *Tiger II ausf B* (King Tiger). These vehicles were coated with zimmerit and painted in the three color scheme, the darker colors being sprayed in wavy bands and lines. Large Red and White turret numbers followed the standard three digit format. In December 1944, *sPzAbt. 501* was redesignated *sPzAbt. 424*, and retained as a corps level unit.

sPzAbt. 502 served on the Eastern Front, primarily in the northern sector. The unit symbol was a White mammoth, an apt comment on the size and weight of the Tiger I. Four Tigers of 1st company, *sPzAbt. 502 (1./502)* were sent to the Leningrad sector in August 1942. These tanks were among the few Tigers painted in the Dark Gray color scheme used from 1938-1943. They were marked with the White mammoth on the rear turret stowage box, and had White three digit turret numbers. White camouflage paint was applied during the winter of 1942-43. Many Tigers had the turret numbers painted over, leaving no markings visible, while others had single digit numbers in Red. This appears to have been a company number, and eventually the three digit numbers, in Red, reappeared. The large White mammoth was no longer used.

In 1943 the Tigers of 3rd company, *sPzAbt. 502* were in overall Dark Yellow with Black three digit turret numbers. 1st company retained the small White numbers. The 2nd company had been destroyed at Stalingrad, but was reformed. Its Tiger Is used Black numbers, in the same style as the 3rd company's vehicles. In the winter of 1943-44, the Tigers were again painted overall White, covering the turret numbers. In 1944, *sPzAbt. 502* repainted its Tigers with a three color, softly sprayed camouflage scheme. The three digit turret numbers reappeared in Red with White borders. The battalion command tanks were numbered 001, 002, and 003. The three digit turret numbers, formerly following the standard system, were apparently changed to number the tanks consecutively in each company.

In 1945 *sPzAbt. 502* was reformed as *sPzAbt. 511*. This redesignation resulted from the confusion caused when *sSS PzAbt. 101*, *102*, and *103* were renumbered as *sSS PzAbt. 501*, *502*, and *503*. *sPzAbt. 511* received some *Tiger II ausf Bs*, but there were not enough to equip the whole unit, so *JgPz 38(t) Hetzers* were used also. *sPzAbt. 511* was engaged in April and May of 1945, fighting in East Prussia.

This Tiger I of sPzAbt 501, seen in Tunisia, shows the battalion's stalking tiger insignia, in Black and Yellow, and the name "Norbert" in Black. The number "7" is Red with a White outline, and is a later addition while on assignment to another unit. (Public Archives of Canada)



sPzAbt 501 had a number of PzKpfw III ausf N support tanks. This vehicle is overall Sand Brown with Red and White numbers. Note the battalion's Yellow and Black stalking tiger sign next to the driver's visor. (Bundesarchiv)

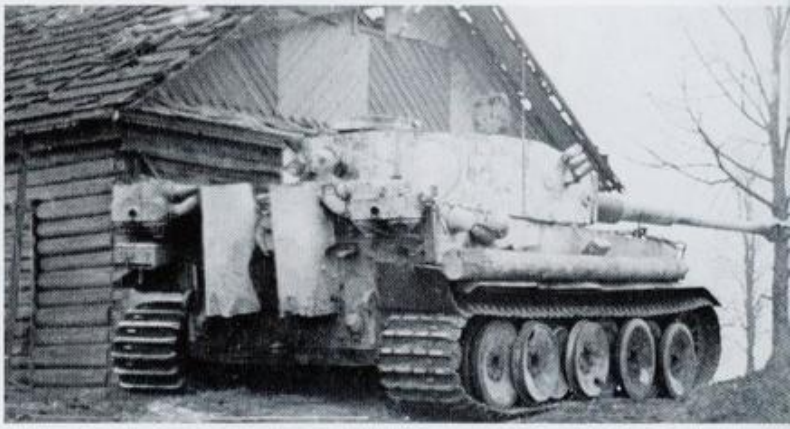
(Above Right) This Tiger I ausf E of sPzAbt 501 in Tunisia shows the typical appearance of these vehicles. Overall color is Sand Brown with Red and White turret numbers. A layer of dust covers the whole tank, blending in color variations. (Bundesarchiv)

sPzAbt. 501

(Right) Some Tigers in Tunisia carried camouflage netting to break up the hull shape, and to erect temporary overhead camouflage shelters. The overall color is Sand Brown, which is a fairly dark tan color. Turret numbers are Red and White. Note the netting around the gun barrel.

(Below) In late February, 1943, sPzAbt 501 was transferred to PzRgt 7 of 10th Panzer Division. The Tigers of the battalion were renumbered as the 7th and 8th companies. Here, a Sand Brown Tiger I carries its new Red and White turret numbers. Note the damage to the left Feifel air cleaner assembly. (Bundesarchiv)

The first four Tiger Is used in combat by sPzAbt 502 were painted overall Dark Gray, probably the only Tigers to see combat action in the old color. This vehicle has been hastily camouflaged in White during the winter of 1942-43. The turret numbers are White with Black outlines.



This Tiger I of sPzAbt 502 carries a complete White camouflage scheme in the winter of 1942-43. Most Tigers eventually had the Feifel air cleaners removed, as they were easily damaged, and not really necessary except in dusty climates. Many vehicles like this didn't carry markings once the White paint was applied. (Bundesarchiv)

Replenishing the ammunition supply of a Tiger often involved using converted obsolete tanks as ammunition carriers capable of traveling with the tanks themselves. This converted PzKpfw III ausf L, seen in the winter of 1943-44, has a base color scheme of Dark Yellow under the White snow camouflage. The markings, in White, denote the 7th vehicle of the battalion HQ section. (Bundesarchiv)

sPzAbt. 503 was formed in mid-1942, and first saw action in southern Russia, during the Don campaign and the withdrawal from Stalingrad. During this period, the Tigers of *sPzAbt. 503* were overall Dark Yellow. The three digit turret numbers followed the standard system, and were painted in White with a fine Black outline. For the CITADEL offensive at Kursk, *sPzAbt. 503* Tigers were repainted with sprayed camouflage. The turret numbers were painted with Red centers and White borders. *sPzAbt. 503* was an Army Group South *(Heeresgruppe Sud)* independent unit, and represented half of all the Tiger I tanks that participated in the Kursk offensive.

In late 1943, *sPzAbt. 503* was made part of *Panzer Regiment "Bake"*, a special battle group which fought in several fierce engagements in the Dnieper sector near Cherkassy. During this period, *sPzAbt. 503* again changed its turret numbering system, to a single digit, probably denoting the company. The number was Red with a fairly wide White border. This change may have resulted from the transfer to *PzRgt. "Bake"*. The *sPzAbt. 503* remained in *PzRgt. "Bake"* until April 1944, then was withdrawn and sent to the West for refitting.

In mid-1944, *sPzAbt. 503* was in France in preparation for the expected Allied landings on the European continent. The battalion staff and 1st company had been re-equipped with *Tiger II Bs*, but the 2nd and 3rd companies retained the *Tiger I E*. All these vehicles had nearly textbook application of the three color camouflage system. Turret numbers once again followed the standard system (company, platoon, vehicle), and were Red with White borders. Many tanks in the battalion carried heavy foliage camouflage because of the danger of Allied air attacks. *sPzAbt. 503* fought through the

This rear view of the same two vehicles seen above shows the markings in White on the rear of the munitions carrier. The turret numbers on the Tiger are Red, and denote tank "134". Note the extra brackets.

During the early spring of 1943, sPzAbt 502 received new Tiger Is to bring the battalion up to strength. These early models still retain the Feifel air cleaners. They are overall Dark Yellow, and here carry no markings or turret numbers, having just been accepted by the unit.

Seen in late summer of 1943, this Tiger I of sPzAbt 502 show typical appearance of the unit's vehicles. The overall color is Yellow, and the turret numbers are Black. The Feifel air cleaners been removed.

Even in the summer of 1943, Russian air cover was effective enough to require added camouflage to conceal vehicles. From a distance, these added branches will break up the silhouette of the tank, and cast extra shadows which conceal it further. (Bundesarchiv)

The other side of the same Tiger I shows the overall Dark Yellow color scheme and Black turret numbers. Note the extra stowage and track shoes added for protection to the turret sides. The rear turret bin has the tank number in Black, here hidden in shadow.

This view of Tiger "311" shows the Olive Green and Da Yellow scheme, the Black numbers on the turret and h side, and the extra track links on the turret. (Bundesarchi

(Above left) In the summer of 1943, sPzAbt 502 began app ing additional camouflage colors. This Tiger I carries a m tle of Olive Green over the Dark Yellow base color. The bla covers over the gun muzzle and coaxial MG indicate that th vehicle is in a rear area.

sPzAbt. 502

(Left) This closeup of "311" shows the small Black stencille mammoth unit symbol which replaced the large White ma moth used in late 1942. The tank's chassis number is ste cilled in White on the black coaxial MG dust cover.

(Below) Another Tiger I of the 3rd company, sPzAbt 502, see in late 1943, shows the effects of a very heavy coating mud and dust. This vehicle has been overpainted in Oliv Green on the Dark Yellow base, primarily with a brush i stead of a spray gun. The light patch near the rear of the hu side is dried mud, contrasted against the much darker dam mud next to it. (Bundesarchiv)

The winter of 1943-44 brought snow camouflage and newer Tiger Is. These Tigers have the later cast cupola and single headlight. The White temporary paint is somewhat rough, the usual case. The turret numbers are Yellow Ochre outlined in Black. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) This view of a 3rd company Tiger shows the zimmerit anti-magnetic mine paste applied to most tanks during 1943-44. The White snow camouflage paint has not been applied to the gun barrel, and appears to have been applied fairly quickly. These temporary paints often didn't wear as well as the base color camouflage paints. (Bundesarchiv)

This Tiger carries a really rough White winter scheme. Crews often used sponges and rags to apply the temporary camouflage schemes. The turret numbers are Yellow Ochre with Black outlines. Turret numbers were often painted in low contrast colors so as not to overly compromise the camouflage. (Bundesarchiv)

Normandy campaign. The 3rd company was caught in a bombing attack in July 1944, and all of its Tigers were destroyed or damaged. It was re-equipped with new *Tiger II ausf Bs* in August. By the end of September, *sPzAbt. 503* was completely equipped with 45 new *Tiger II Bs*. It was then transfered to Hungary and committed to the defense of Budapest. In January 1945, *sPzAbt. 503* was renamed *sPzAbt. Feldherrnhalle* and attached to *PzGren. Div. FHH*. This division was eventually destroyed in the defense of Budapest. Out of 50,000 German troops trapped in the city, only a few hundred were able to escape.

sPzAbt. 504 was formed in 1943, and was the second unit to send Tigers to North Africa. The battalion staff, workshop company, and 1st tank company arrived in Tunisia in February of 1943. The 2nd tank company re mained in Sicily. The tank company had four platoons, each with two Tiger I tanks and two *Pzkpfw III* support tanks. The battalion adopted as a unit symbol a Panzer rhomboid with a stylized spear and tank track inside. This was not applied to the Tigers, but was used on signs and support vehicles. The Tigers of *sPzAbt. 504* in Tunisia did not carry any turret numbers. The only marking carried was a small White Panzer rhomboid with a Red line painted near one end. The company number "1", was next to the rhomboid. This marking was carried on both sides, near the front. The tanks were supposed to be painted in Desert Brown, but the Allies did encounter Olive Green Tiger Is in Africa, and some of *sPzAbt. 504's* tanks may have been Green. Olive Green would have been effective camouflage in Tunisia, which has a temperate climate, with moderate rainfall in the spring. All of the *sPzAbt. 504* Tigers were destroyed or captured. One of these is displayed in the R.A.C. Tank Museum at Bovington, and was painted Brown.

The second company of *sPzAbt. 504* was attached to *FshPz. Div. Hermann Göring* for the defense of Sicily. The markings on these tanks were virtually

The White snow camouflage did not wear as well as permanent paint. This Tiger I of sPzAbt 502 shows the deterioration of the paint along edges and on upper surfaces. The turret numbers are Red. The suspension hasn't been repainted. This was a common practice, to save supplies of the White winter paint. (Bundesarchiv)

This closeup of a sPzAbt 502 Tiger shows the zimmerit paste coa and the personal name "Dorothee" in White on the Dark Yellow bas color. The White camouflage coat has been roughly applied wit sponges, as was the usual practice. The turret numbers are Yello Ochre with Black outlines. (Bundesarchiv)

Seen late in 1944, these tanks of sPzAbt 502 are roughly painted i White over the Dark Yellow base. Lack of fuel supplies and fue transport vehicles forced many units to carry as much fuel as possi ble on the outside of the tanks and other tactical vehicles. These fue drums will be dropped off before they go into action. The turre numbers are Red.

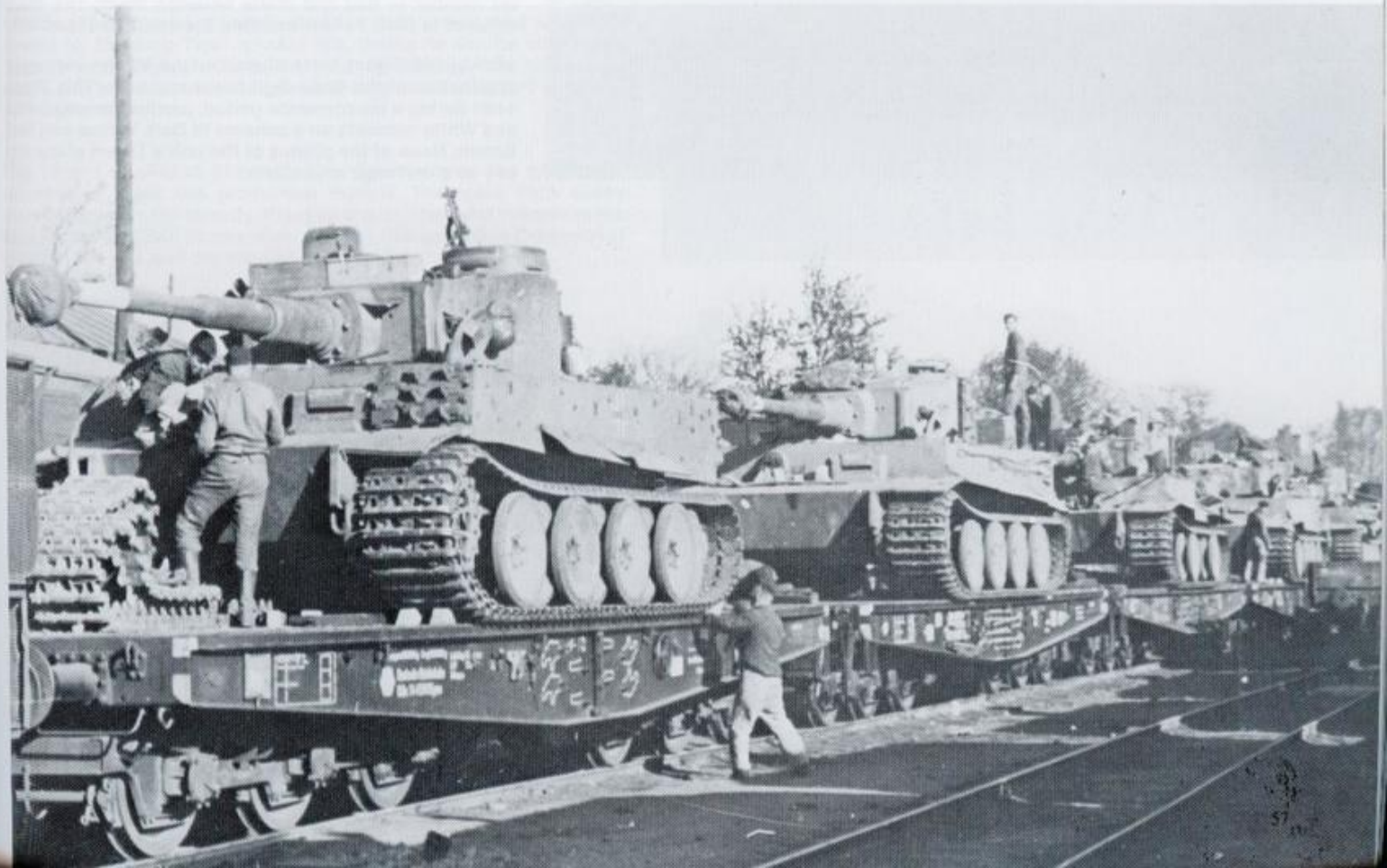
identical to those which went to Africa, except for the company number "2" next to the White rhomboid. These tanks are believed to have been repainted in the new Dark Yellow color. The battalion's vehicles were evacuated across the strait of Messina to Italy along with the other withdrawing German forces. The surviving troops were withdrawn to Holland for refitting and rebuilding of the battalion.

sPzAbt. 504 spent the rest of the war in Italy. The battalion was rebuilt with a full three company organization, with additional personnel from *PzAbt. 18.* The unit trained in Germany, and when returned to Italy, it was assigned to support *17th SS PzGren. Div. Götz von Berlichingen.* Its first action in Italy was in support of the 362nd Inf. Div. in the containment of the Allied advance up the Italian coast following the Anzio landing.

In Germany during mid-1944, *sPzAbt. 504* painted its new Tigers with a heavy overspray of Olive Green and Red Brown over the Dark Yellow base. Replacement vehicles may not, however, have received the same paint scheme. Three digit turret numbers replaced the old small *Panzer* rhomboid. The numbers followed the standard system and were painted in White with narrow Black borders. The company number was 50 percent larger than the

The turret numbers on this Tiger I of sPzAbt 503 are Red with White borders. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with an overspray of Red Brown. Note the S-mine loaded in the middle discharger tube. This mid production Tiger retains the early cupola, but has no Feifel air cleaners.

Though normally the outer road wheels and wide combat tracks were removed for railroad transport, it was not uncommon for Tigers to be moved in their combat configuration. These Tigers of sPzAbt 503 are Dark Yellow overall. The first two vehicles have White kill rings on the gun barrels. The turret numbers are Red with White borders.



It required three 18-ton SdKfz 9 tractors to tow a disa
ed Tiger I, but three of these massive tractors could ev
pull a Tiger I up a rather steep grade. This tank is Da
Yellow with an overspray of Red Brown. The turr
numbers are Red and White. (Bundesarchiv)

(Left) For a time in 1943, sPzAbt 503 used two nation
crosses on the rear turret stowage box with an extra t
ret number in Red and White between them. The co
scheme is Dark Yellow and Red Brown. (Bundesarchi

sPzAbt 503 Tigers were characterized by the very ne
application of the three-digit turret numbers. This Tig
seen during a maintenance period, carries the usual R
and White numbers on a scheme of Dark Yellow and R
Brown. None of the photos of the unit's Tigers show a
use of a unit sign or emblem.

This Tiger of sPzAbt 503 (assigned to PzRgt "Bake") was disabled by a mine. The color scheme is Dark Yellow and Red Brown. The single digit, representing the company number, is Red with a White border. (Bundesarchiv)

In early 1944, Tigers appeared with the steel-rimmed road wheels intended for the King Tiger. sPzAbt 503, during its service with PzRgt "Bake", used Tigers with both types of wheels. This close view shows the Red and White turret number, and the zimmerit anti-mine paste. (Bundesarchiv)

This Tiger I of sPzAbt 503 of PzRgt "Bake" shows the typical appearance of these late production models. The spare track shoes serve to increase the already effective armor. The color scheme is the Dark Yellow and Red Brown often used by this unit. Note the contrast between the wet and dry mud areas. (Bundesarchiv)

The 3rd company of sPzAbt 503 retained their Tiger I tanks during the campaign in Normandy. This is a late production version with the cast cupola and steel rimmed road wheels. The color scheme is a textbook application of Red Brown and olive green over a base of Dark Yellow. Note the battered condition of the few sheet metal mudguards that remain. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) The 1st and 2nd companies converted to the King Tiger during the spring of 1944. These King Tigers of the 1st company carry a scheme of Red Brown and Olive Green over the Dark Yellow base. Even heavy tanks have to be parked in trees to hide them from Allied aircraft. (Bundesarchiv)

Some King Tigers of the 2nd company used a different camouflage scheme from the other vehicles. Here, the striped three color pattern is shown clearly. The national cross could be painted in several different positions on the hull and turret side. The turret numbers are Red and White. (Bundesarchiv)

This crew is reinstalling the side skirts, removed for routine maintenance. These skirts also served as anti-bazooka shields. The camouflage scheme is the standard three colors of Dark Yellow, Red Brown, and Olive Green. The turret numbers are fresh Red paint, and will be outlined in White. This tank is assigned to the commander of the 3rd company. Note the use of Olive Green to fill in the turret cross.

This side view shows the zimmerit coating applied to the hull and turret. The color scheme is Olive Green and Red Brown over Dark Yellow. The turret numbers are Red and White. The spare track links are a standard feature on the King Tiger's turret. (Bundesarchiv)

In January, 1945, sPzAbt 503 was renamed sPzAbt "Feldherrnhalle" and was attached to the "Feldherrnhalle" Panzergrenadier Division. This King Tiger of sPzAbt "FHH" is seen in Budapest during the spring of 1945. Note the neatly applied three color scheme and the Red and White turret numbers.

platoon and vehicle numbers, and these smaller digits were lined up with the top edge of the company number. *sPzAbt. 504* saw a great deal of action in the Italian campaign, including the Arno river campaign and the defense of northern Italy. In late 1944, in the Vienna area, *sPzAbt. 504* was partly re-equipped with *Tiger II Bs*, but no photographs of these have survived. The battalion surrendered at the end of the war, along with other German units in Italy.

sPzAbt. 505 was formed in January of 1943. It was equipped with Tiger Is painted overall Dark Yellow. The numbering system used was the standard three digit designation, painted in Red with White borders. The battalion staff tanks were *"I"*, *"II"*, and *"III"*. With these markings, *sPzAbt. 505's* Tigers took part in OPERATION CITADEL as part of FM Model's *9th Armee*. After the Kursk offensive, *sPzAbt. 505* was moved to the Smolensk area. During the fall of 1943, *sPzAbt. 505* retained the three digit turret numbers, but the tanks had a Red Brown pattern. In 1944, this same scheme prevailed, though newer Tigers had cast cupolas, zimmerit, and, in some cases, the new steel-rimmed wheels developed for the *Tiger II ausf B* King Tiger. Some Tigers of the unit carried a stenciled charging bull emblem in White, next to i driver's visor.

In mid-1944, the battalion began applying its emblem to the turrets of Tiger Is. This symbol was a charging mounted knight with a lance. It w stenciled onto the turret in Red Brown (the second camouflage color) a Black. The turret numbers were then moved to the recuperator housing the *8.8cм Kwk 36*. On some vehicles, the housing had a Yellow band paint around it, and the turret number was then painted in Black. At this poi many vehicles did not carry unit insignias on the turret; in fact replacem vehicles were not always camouflaged.

This rear view of "233" shows the standard full array of markings an camouflage used by sPzAbt "FHH". These King Tigers are perhap the best examples of the ideal application of colors and marking The vehicle number on the rear of the turret, in Red and White, used by the unit commander to identify the vehicle from his positio behind the first line of tanks. (Bundesarchiv)

Seen during evaluation trials in Britain, this captured Tiger I of sPzAbt 504 shows the typical appearance of this unit's vehicles in North Africa. The camouflage scheme is overall Sand Brown (a dark tan color). sPzAbt 504 didn't use turret numbers in Africa, and this distinguished their Tigers from those of sPzAbt 501. Note the Whi rhomboid at the front corner of the hull side. It has a Red line near t front edge, and the company number, "1", just behind, also in Whi

By early September, 1944, *sPzAbt. 505* had been equipped with new *Tiger II ausf Bs*. These vehicles were painted Dark Yellow with dark bands and "cloud patches" of Olive Green. The charging knight unit sign was stenciled on the turret sides, in Black and Olive Green. On most of the tanks, the zimmerit was applied in a smooth coating around the emblem which made the stenciling easier. The battalion staff tanks were *"I"*, *"II"*, and *"III"*. *sPzAbt. 505* fought in East Prussia from September of 1944. *sPzAbt 505* was used with *24th* and *25th Panzer Divisions*, initially against the Narev bridgeheads in the 1944 Russian offensive into East Prussia. The battalion fought in East Prussia until the end of the conflict.

sPzAbt. 506 was formed in July 1943, primarily from personnel of *III Abt./Pz. Rgt. 33* of *9th Pz. Div.* In August, the battalion received forty-five new Tiger I tanks. The unit was engaged in the Dnieper battles in 1943. On New Year's Day, 1944, *sPzAbt. 506* went to the area south of Korovograd, and fought in Krivoi-Rog. During this period, the battalion's Tiger Is were painted overall Dark Yellow with light oversprayed areas of Red Brown. These tanks carried large White turret numbers, which were one or two digits. These were vehicle numbers, and went from 1 to 14 in each company.

This Tiger I of sPzAbt 505 shows the appearance of this unit's Tigers before adoption of the unit emblem. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with a broad striped pattern in Red Brown. The barrel has been painted roughly in White. Outdoor field repairs were a normal procedure for even major operations like installing a turret.

sPzAbt. 505

In 1944, sPzAbt 505 adopted as a unit symbol a knight mounted on a charging horse. The emblem is painted in two colors, Black and the Red Brown camouflage color. The vehicle colors are Dark Yellow and Red Brown. The tank number on the recoil cylinder housing is Black on a Yellow band. Some of this battalion's tanks used Olive Green for the second camouflage color, and these vehicles would then use Olive Green for the unit emblem second color. (Bundesarchiv)

Company commander's vehicles had the company numbers painted in Red with a White border. In 1944, *sPzAbt. 506* was withdrawn to Germany for refitting and preparation for action in the West. Their Tiger Is were distributed as replacement vehicles to other units.

sPzAbt. 506 received new *Tiger II ausf Bs* in August 1944. The full battalion establishment of 45 tanks was retained. In late September, the battalion was sent to the area around Osterboek, west of Arnhem. It took part in the German defense against the combined Allied thrust to the Rhine during OPERATION MARKET GARDEN. The following month, *sPzAbt. 506* took part in the defense of Aachen. In November 1944, the battalion was strengthened by the addition of a 4th company. This new company had been organized originally as a heavy assault support unit, used wherever necessary — a *Feuerwehr* (fire brigade). Its first commander was named Hummel, and this was the name given to the company. *sPzKp. "Hummel"* (now 4th company, *sPzAbt. 506*) was equipped with Tiger Is. This new company was fully integrated by early December 1944.

At this time, *sPzAbt. 506 Tiger II ausf Bs* carried a standard three color camouflage scheme. Some of these tanks did not have the zimmerit anti-mine coating. On its Tiger IIs, the battalion had changed its turret numbers to the standard three digit system. The turret numbers were believed to have been painted in different colors, as the 3rd company used Blue numbers with Yellow borders for contrast. There were small markings applied to at least some of the battalion tanks: three inch Yellow circles with White crosses. The unit symbol was applied to the Tiger Is, but not the Tiger IIs. It was probably painted on softskin vehicles. This symbol consisted of a stylized letter *W* in Black outline, with a Black and Yellow tiger with a Red mouth, and a Red shield with a White cross in it.

sPzAbt. 506 was the only *Heer* Tiger battalion to take part in the A dennes offensive. The battalion fought around Bastogne, and eventual withdrew with the rest of the German forces. It took part in the defense Germany and surrendered to US forces in the Ruhr pocket in April of 194

sPzAbt. 507 was formed in September 1943, from personnel taken from *Abt./Pz Rgt. 4* of *13th Pz. Div.* It was organized in the usual fashion: a battalio HQ staff company, 3 tank companies, and a workshop company, pl supply and support detachments. As a battalion symbol, *sPzAbt. 507* chose Black shield, with a White border and deep cutout in the upper right corne On the shield, in White, was a blacksmith hammering a sword on an anv This symbol was carried on the rear plate armor of the unit's Tiger Is.

sPzAbt. 507 used a standard three digit numbering system with Whi numbers. The first digit was fifty percent taller than the second and thi numbers. The tanks were painted Dark Yellow with an irregular overspray pattern of Red Brown. In 1944, replacement tanks arrived with the later ca cupola.

The battalion fought on the Russian front, on the Tarnopol river abo Vitebsk and around Narev. After service in the Ukraine, and other defensi battles in the East, *sPzAbt. 507* was withdrawn to Germany. It was then se to Czechoslovakia and finally attempted to surrender to US forces, but w cut off by a Russian offensive and had to surrender to the Russians. By th time there were no Tigers. The battalion had been equipped with one co pany of *Ostwind (3.7cм Flak 43 on PzKpfw IV)* flak tanks, and most of the pe sonnel were, in effect, escorting infantry.

These two views of Tiger Is of sPzAbt 506 are from th Russian front during the winter of 1943-44. During break in the action, this Tiger I is being rearmed. O both these tanks, the unit symbol, a tiger and shiel with the letter "W", is painted on the rear turr stowage bin. The unit emblem's tiger is Yellow Och and Black with a Black "W"; the shield is Red with White cross. (Bundesarchiv)

sPzAbt. 506

Another view of the same two Tigers shows the d ferent applications of White camouflage paint. The tu ret numbers on the left Tiger are Black. The vehicle o the right is a command tank with extra radios and a st antenna. (Bundesarchiv)

Tiger Tank Battalion Markings

Tiger I ausf E, sPzAbt 501, Tunisia, North Africa, 1942-43.

Tiger I ausf E, sPzAbt 504, Tunisia, 1943.

Tiger I ausf E, sPzAbt 502, northern Russia, 1943.

sPzAbt. 508 was formed in August of 1943, from personnel from *PzRgt. 8*, and later, more men from *PzAbt. 190*. The battalion served in the Anzio-Nettuno area, and suffered heavy casualties in these actions. The Tigers in *sPzAbt. 508* were Dark Yellow and at least some of them were oversprayed in Olive Green. The turret numbers used the standard three digit format. The company number was a White outline and was larger than the platoon and vehicle numbers, which were solid White and only one third as high as the company number. The unit symbol of *sPzAbt. 508* was a Black bison on a White shield with a Black border. It has not been verified that this symbol was applied to the Tigers in this unit.

sPzAbt. 509 was organized in September 1943, from elements of *Pz. Rgt. 204* of *22nd Pz. Div.* The battalion was equipped with Tiger Is, and fought on the Eastern front. From late 1943 to the early spring of 1944, *sPzAbt. 509* was engaged near Kirovograd, Krivoi-Rog, Kiev, and Pavlovka, in southern Russia. In November of 1943, the 3rd company of *sPzAbt. 509* was detached and assigned to support *2. SS Pz. Div. Das Reich*. The 1st and 2nd companies fought at Novosselki, Shimotir, Chmelnik, and Kiev.

The Tiger Is of *sPzAbt. 509* at this period were Dark Yellow oversprayed with wavy lines of Red Brown. The turret numbers followed the standard format, and were painted in White. The digits were hand painted in a fairly fan-

This Tiger I of sPzAbt 508 carries the turret number "112" in White on the rear stowage bin. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with a heavy overspray of Olive Green. The lighter areas around the tracks are dried mud. (Bundesarchiv)

sPzAbt 508 was committed to action after the Anzio landings in January 1944. This Tiger I carries the distinctive unit turret numbers in White. The large open digit is the company number; the others are the platoon and vehicle numbers. The vehicle color scheme is a very heavy mottling of Olive Green over a barely visible base of Dark Yellow. (NARS)

A Tiger I of sPzAbt 508 passes in front of the Victor Emmanuel monument in Rome on its way to the front near Anzio. This is one of the replacement vehicles received after the initial actions in early 1944. The color scheme is Red Brown and Olive Green sprayed over a Dark Yellow base. (Bundesarchiv)

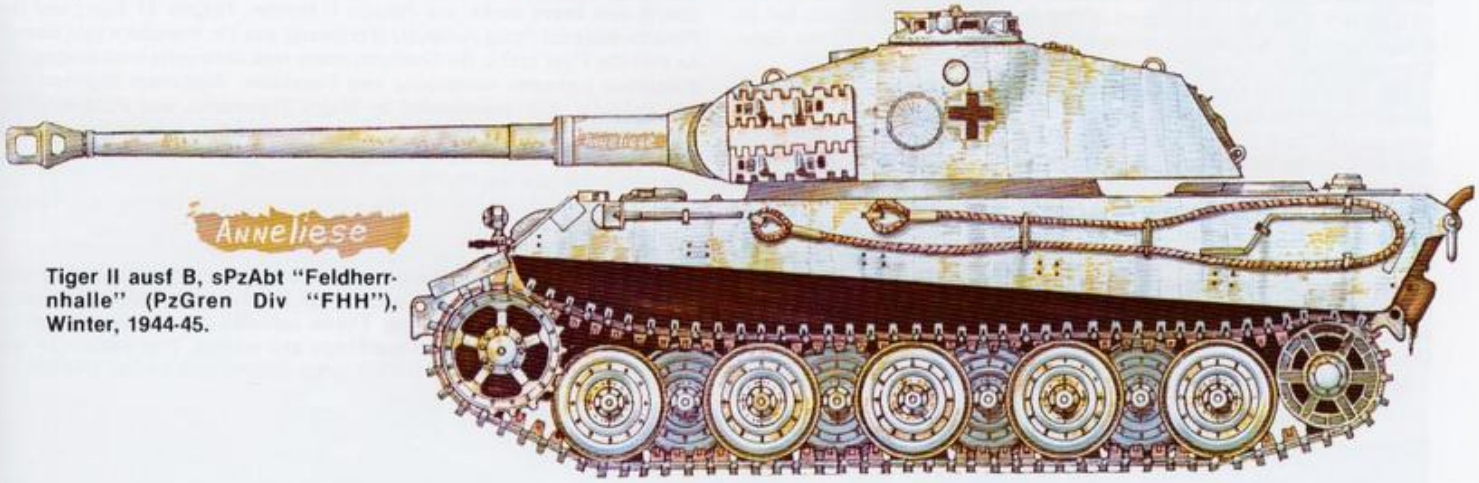
Another Tiger of sPzAbt 508 is seen north of Anzio. The Dark Yellow base is sprayed with Red Brown and some Olive Green. Again, no turret number is carried on the turret side. The foliage for enhanced camouflage is now a standard (and necessary) practice. Note again the very heavy dust coat which has lightened the entire nose of the vehicle. (Bundesarchiv)

PzJag "Ferdinand", JgPzRgt 656
(PzJagAbt 654), Kursk, July 1943.

Tiger I ausf E, sPzAbt 507, Russia,
spring 1944.

Tiger I ausf E, sPzAbt 506, Russia,
summer 1944.

Tiger II ausf B, sPzAbt 501 southern Poland, late 1944.



Tiger II ausf B, sPzAbt "Feldherrnhalle" (PzGren Div "FHH"), Winter, 1944-45.

Tiger II ausf B, sPzAbt 505, late 1944.

Jagdtiger, JagdtigerAbt 512, Germany, spring 1945.

cy Roman style with thick and thin strokes. During the winter of 1943-44, the tanks were overpainted in White. The turret numbers were repainted in Red, but were very rough, and had White paint thinly smeared over them.

During September of 1944, *sPzAbt. 509* was in Sennelager, the training ground, for re-equipping with new *Tiger II ausf Bs*. In January of 1945, the battalion was sent to Hungary, and assigned to *IV SS PzKorps*. The German offensive started on January 18th, and the battalion was engaged in a number of battles in Hungary and then Austria. *sPzAbt. 509* surrendered to American troops on May 9, 1945, near Linz. The battalion had no tanks — its motorized component was one *Schwimmwagen*, one radio car, and one truck.

sPzAbt. 510 was formed in June 1944. It was equipped with Tiger Is, and, from August 1944, fought against the Russians in East Prussia. Part of the battalion was detached to *14th Pz. Div.* for an assault on the Russian forces in November 1944. The other company was attached to the *30th Inf. Div. sPzAbt. 510* was heavily engaged during the Kurland campaign, operating with *14th Pz. Div.* in early 1945. In March, two companies of the battalion were withdrawn to the Kassel area in Germany. The remainder of *SPzAbt. 510*, with thirteen Tiger Is, was assigned to *14th Pz. Div.* The last Tiger was lost on 8 May, and the battalion surrendered with other survivors of the fierce Kurland fighting.

The Tiger Is of *sPzAbt. 510* were late production models with cast cupolas, *zimmerit*, single headlights, and, possibly, the steel-rimmed road wheels. They were painted Dark Yellow. For the East Prussian and Kurland winter battles, they were overpainted with White camouflage paint. No turret numbers were used with the White paint. The White paint was removed in the spring, but no photographs of this period have survived. It is not known if the tanks carried turret numbers late in the war, or what system might have been used. Generally, the Tiger battalions seem to have adopted the standard three digit system as the war progressed. Indeed, many non-standard practices were found in the Tiger companies attached to various army commands or divisions, in Africa, and the 1943 Russian campaigns at Kursk and the Don and Dnieper rivers.

Jagdtiger Abteilung 512 was formed in the late fall of 1944 and was equipped with twenty *Jagdtiger* heavy tank destroyers, mounting *12.8cm PAK 44 L/55* guns on modified *Tiger II ausf B* chassis. There were two companies, each with ten vehicles. Two *Jagdtigers* were in each company HQ section, and four *Jagdtigers* were in each of the two platoons. Though very heavy, and limited by its requirements for good roads and bridges, the *Jagdtiger* was a very effective tank destroyer, able to knock out virtually any Allied tank at very long range.

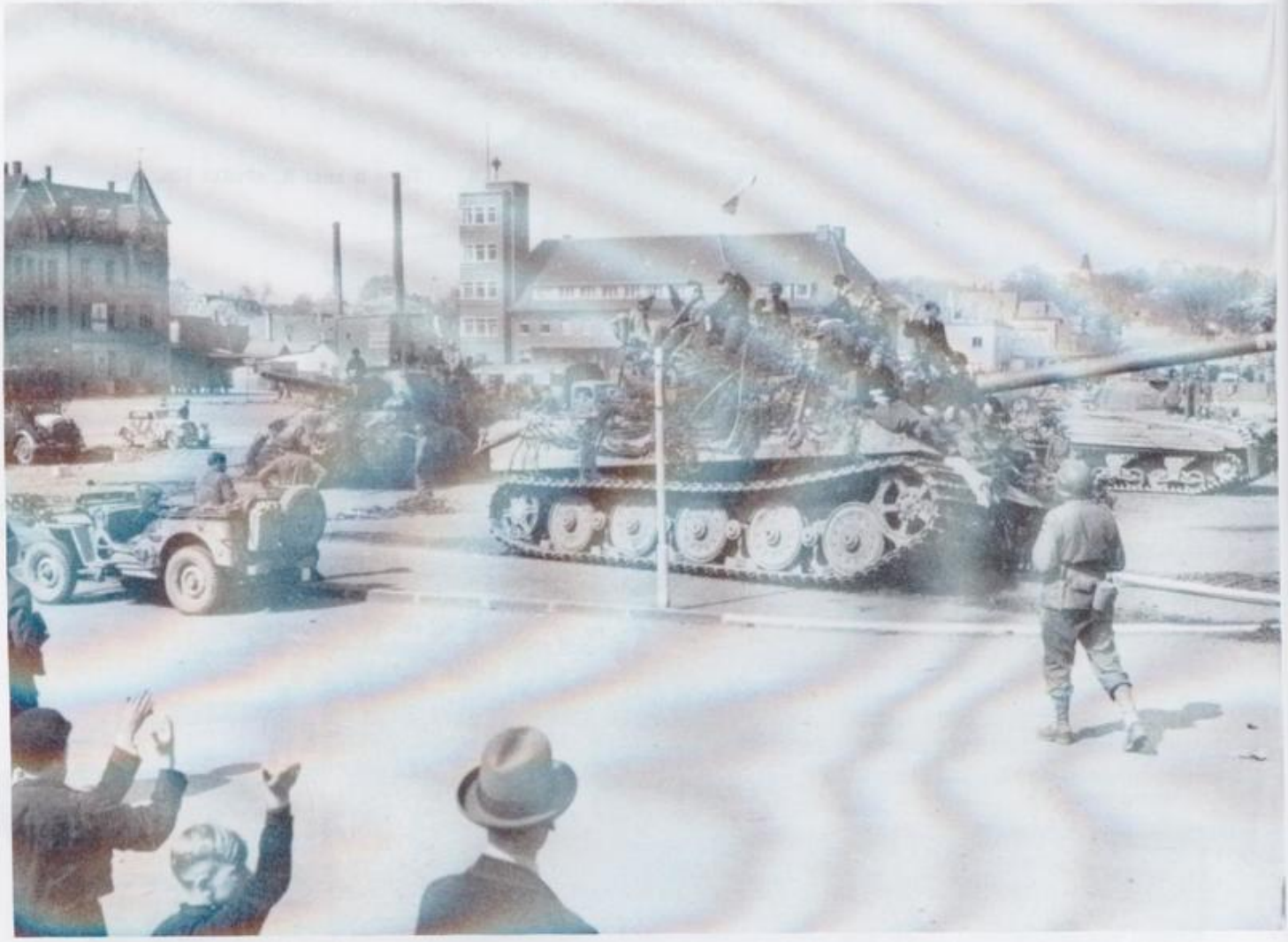
The *Jagdtigers* of *JgJgrAbt 512* were overall Dark Yellow. No numbering system is known. The only photographs of this unit's vehicles show very heavy applications of foliage as supplementary camouflage, covering most of the superstructure.

The two companies, named "Company *Carius*" and "Company *Ernst*", fought as separate units. "Company *Ernst*" was reinforced with a platoon of *Sturmgeschütz*, one *PzKpfw IV*, and a platoon of self-propelled 3.7cm flak guns. Both companies fought in Germany's last battles, and surrendered to US forces in the Ruhr.

During OPERATION CITADEL at Kursk, the Germans introduced several new heavy tanks: the *PzKpfw V Panther*, *PzKpfw VI Tiger*, and the Porsche-designed *PzJag Ferdinand* (Ferdinand was Dr. Porsche's first name). As with the Tiger tanks, the *Ferdinand* heavy tank destroyers were assigned to a separate regiment, comprising two battalions. *Jagdpanzer Regiment 656* had *PzJagAbt. 653*, commanded by Major Steinwachs, and *PzJagAbt. 654*, under Major Noak. Each battalion had a headquarters section (battery) and three batteries of *Ferdinands*. *PzJagAbt. 653* had the 1st, 2nd and 3rd batteries, and *PzJag. 654* had the 4th, 5th, and 6th batteries.

The vehicles were all Dark Yellow with heavy sprayed lines of Olive Green,

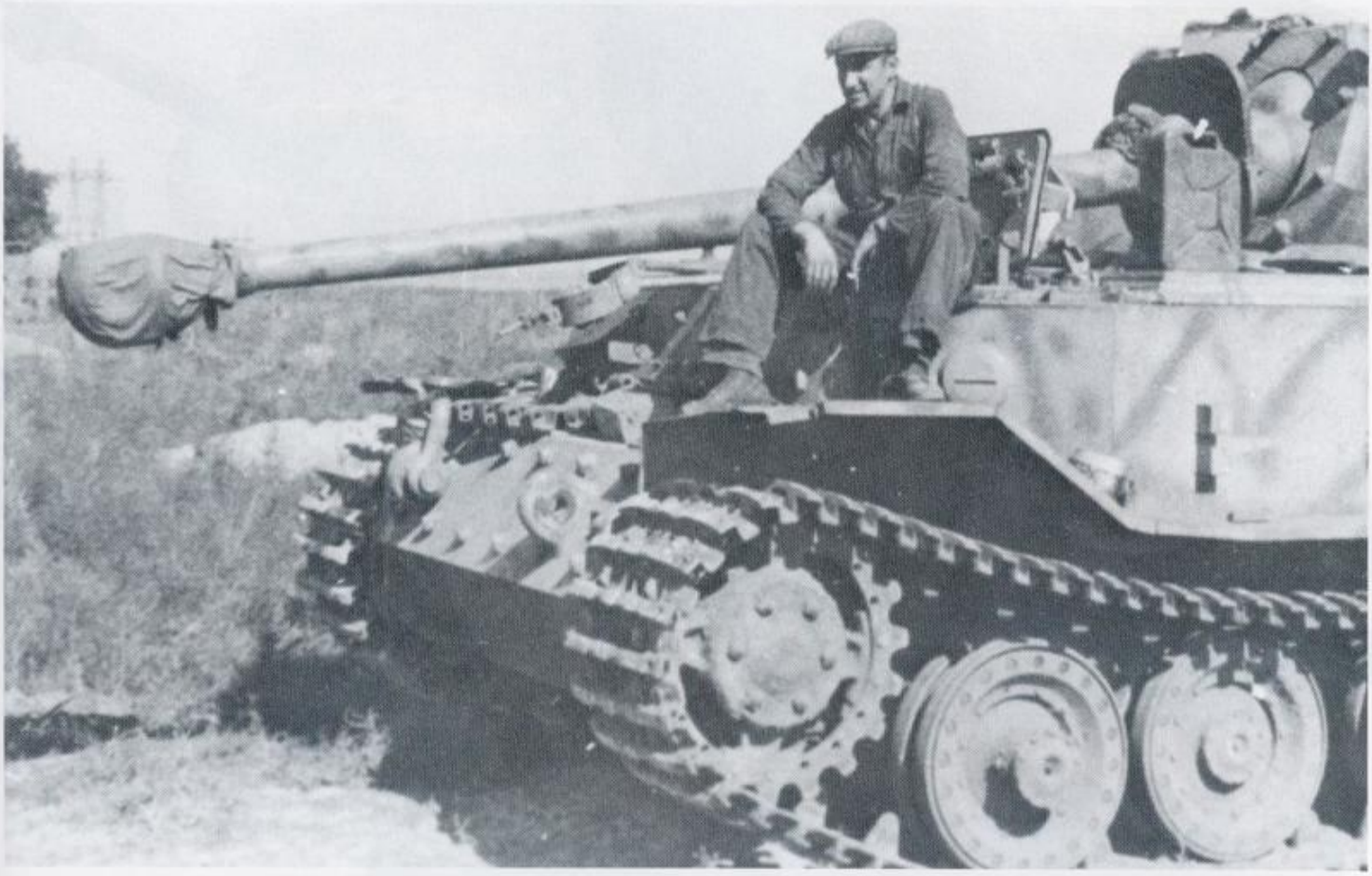
This photograph shows the remaining Jagdtigers of sPzAbt 512 surrendering to American forces in the Ruhr, April 1945. The color scheme is overall Dark Yellow. These vehicles carry extensive extra foliage camouflage, and no markings are visible. The vehicle in the foreground carries two White kill rings on the gun barrel. (NARS)



and carried three digit numbers in White to denote the battery, section, and vehicle. The *Ferdinands* of *PzJagAbt. 654* also displayed a White *N* on the front left mudguard. (*N* denoted Major Noak, the battalion commander.)

The Ferdinands of *JgPz.Rgt. 656* suffered fairly high losses at Kursk. They were used as break-through tanks, a role for which they were completely unsuited. A number of vehicles were fitted with rough wood shelves behind the superstructure to carry several *Panzergrenadiers* to protect the vehicles against Russian tank-killer infantry. The *Panzergrenadiers*, fully exposed and often unable to fight effectively from moving vehicles, suffered heavy casualties. Some crews in Major Noak's *PzJagAbt. 654* fired *MG42s* down the barrels of the main guns. The gunners used the main sights to line up the guns on groups of Russian infantry.

The surviving Ferdinands were returned to Germany and modified to improve their defensive capabilities. Modified *StuG III* cupolas were installed in the roof plates, and bow *MG* mounts were added. The vehicles received coats of *zimmerit* halfway up the superstructure and tools and stowage were altered. These improved vehicles, now designated as *PzJag Elefant*, were sent to Italy. They had more success in the Italian campaign, being used in semi-static positions as true long range tank destroyers, but the chassis was extremely vulnerable to mines. Loss of even one set of wheels rendered the *Elefant* immobile, and many damaged vehicles had to be abandoned. Vehicles in Italy were Dark Yellow with sprayed spots in Red Brown and Olive Green.



The PzJag "Ferdinand" self-propelled anti-tank gun was the most heavily armored vehicle used by the Germans during the battle of Kursk. This view of vehicle "612" of PzJagAbt 654 shows the heavybolted extra armor on the front of the hull. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with a striped pattern of Olive Green. (Norman W. Kuhns)

This side view of "612" shows the typical appearance of the "Ferdinands" that fought at Kursk. The Dark Yellow base color and Olive Green pattern have been applied to break up the silhouette of this rather ungainly vehicle. The number is in White. There are already oil stains and other marks on the hull and superstructure. (Norman W. Kuhns collection)

Waffen SS Tiger Tank Unit Markings

Tiger I ausf E, 1st SS PzGren Div Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler", Kharkhov, southern Russia, early 1943.

Tiger I ausf E, 2nd SS PzGren Div "Das Reich", Russia, spring 1943.

Tiger II ausf B, sSSPzAbt 501, France, 1944.

Tiger II ausf B, sSSPzAbt 503, early 1945.

Waffen SS Tiger Markings at Kursk

Tiger I ausf E, 1st SS PzGren Div Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler", Kursk, July 1943.

8. sPzKp
"Das Reich"
Kursk, 1943

Tiger I ausf E, 2nd SS PzGren Div "Das Reich", northern Russia, late 1943.

Tiger I ausf E, 2nd SS PzGren Div "Das Reich", Kursk, July 1943.

Tiger I ausf E, 3rd SS PzGren Div "Totenkopf", Kursk, July 1943.

Grossdeutschland

Panzergrenadier Division Grossdeutschland was one of two *Heer* (Army) divisions to receive an organic battalion of Tiger tanks (the other was *Panzer Lehr Division*). *Grossdeutschland* had begun receiving Tiger Is in February, 1943, as part of the build up to a full strength *Panzer Division*, with a third battalion of Tigers. At the time of the Kursk offensive one company of Tigers was integrated as the 13th company in *PzRgt. GD*. These Tiger Is were painted overall Dark Yellow. *GD* Tigers used the *S* prefix and numbered the tanks consecutively. After the Kursk offensive was over, *III Abt. GD* was organized with a battalion HQ company, and three tank companies: the 9th, 10th, and 11th. The 9th company was organized from *GD*'s old 13th company, the 10th company was based on the 3rd company of *sPzAbt. 501*, and the 11th company came from the personnel of the 3rd company of *sPzAbt. 504*.

In late 1943 and early 1944, the Tigers were overall Dark Yellow, with some sprayed Red Brown. The turret numbers were changed, and a different system was used. The *S* prefix was used for the battalion command tanks. The three companies used letters to denote the company. *A*, *B*, and *C* denoted the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd companies. Two numbers followed the company letter, to identify the platoon and vehicle. This system was used through 1944 and perhaps later. The markings used by *GD*'s Tigers in the defense of East Prussia are not known. Many of these vehicles were so heavily camouflaged with foliage that no markings were visible. The Tigers used in late 1944 and early 1945 were late production *Tiger I ausf Es* with cast cupolas, zimmerit, and steel-rimmed roadwheels.

GD fought in southern Russia and Rumania during the early and middle months of 1944. At the end of July 1944, *GD* was transferred to the northern sector of the Eastern Front. The division saw action in Poland and East Prussia. Reduced by heavy losses, *III Abt.* (Tiger) of *GD* consolidated as the 9th company and distributed the rest of its Tigers to *sPzAbt. 502/511*. During this period, all the tanks may have been marked for the 1st *(A)* company, as there are far more photos of these vehicles than any others. In December 1944, *III Abt.* was completely re-equipped with late production *Tiger I ausf Es*, and used these vehicles until the end of the fighting in East Prussia. Although much of the division was forced to surrender to the Russians, some elements were able to retreat to Schleswig-Holstein, where they surrendered to British troops.

This Tiger of "GD" is Dark Yellow with a light mottling in Red Brown. The turret numbers are Black. This Tiger is being prepared for combat — note the narrow transport track in front of the vehicle. The "GD" helmet can be seen on the road sign at the right of the picture.

This early production Tiger I is seen in late 1943, still fitted with the Feifel air cleaners. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with some light mottling in Red Brown. The markings, in Black, denote the 2nd vehicle in the 1st company. The Tigers in each company carried the company letter ("A", "B", "C" for 1st, 2nd, or 3rd company), followed by the platoon and vehicle number of the standard three digit system. From early 1943 through the epic battle at Kursk, the Tigers of "GD" used an "S" prefix with the platoon and vehicle numbers following. (Bundesarchiv)

Another Tiger of "GD", seen during a track change, carries a Dark Yellow color scheme with a Red Brown overspray. As was common, this crew has gathered a number of extra items of equipment. The turret number, "A32", is Black.

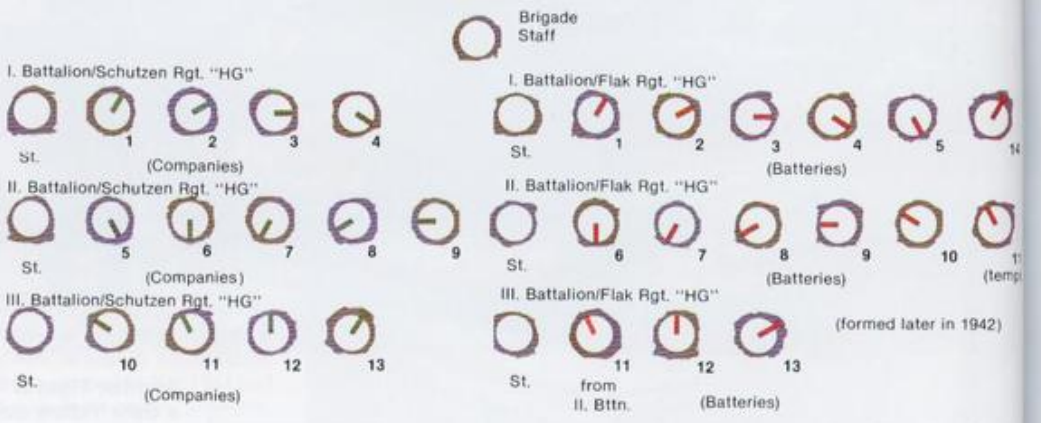
Another Tiger of the same company is backed up to the wide combat tracks prior to changing the tracks. This is a late production vehicle with the steel rimmed road wheels. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with mottling in Red Brown and turret numbers in Black.

This late production Tiger I is being delivered to "GD" in 1944. The color scheme is overall Dark Yellow. This vehicle has no markings painted on it yet; these will be added when the tank is prepared for action. Note the wide combat tracks stored under the tank on the flatcar.

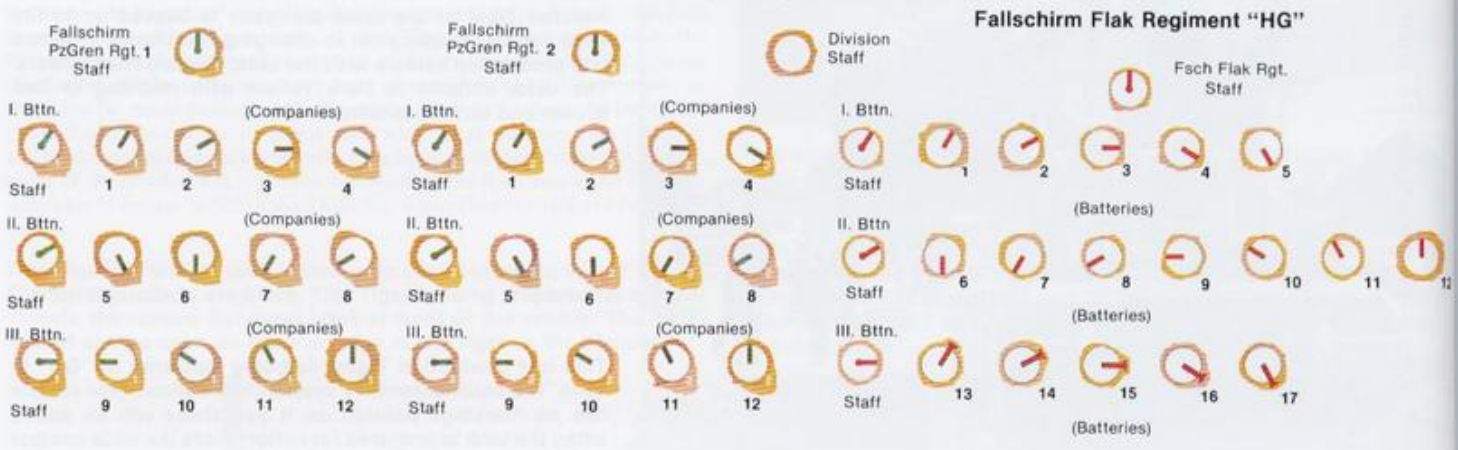
"Hermann Göring" Unit Markings

Regiment "General Göring"

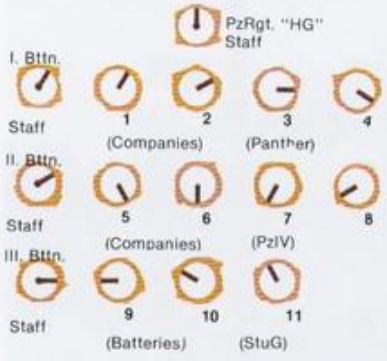
Brigade "Hermann Göring"



Fallschirm Panzer Division "Hermann Göring" (1943-44)



Fallschirm Panzer Regiment "HG"



Fallschirm Panzer Artillerie Regiment "HG"

Reconnaisance Bttn. "HG"

Communications Battalion "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Pioneer Battalion "HG"

Medical Battalion "HG"

Maintenance Battalion "HG"

Service Units

Fallschirm Panzerkorps "Hermann Göring" Markings

Fallschirm Panzerkorps "Hermann Göring"
Korps staff sign — only the Korps staff used the eagle
(All korps level units used the circle inside the square.)

Fallschirm Flak Regiment "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Pioneer Battalion "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Assault Battalion "HG"

Medical Battalion "HG"

Maintenance Battalion "HG"

Vehicle Workshop Companies

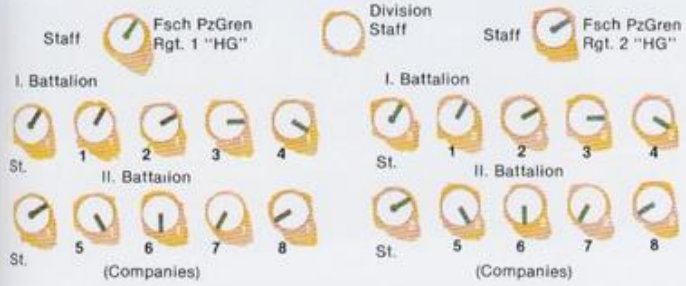
Service Units (All at PzKorps Level)

Fallschirm Panzerkorps Communications Battalion

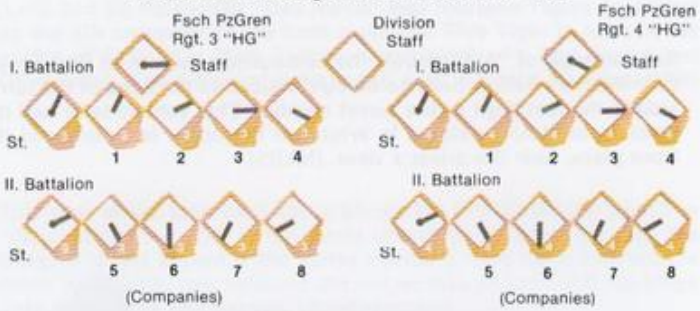
Transportation Battalion "HG"

(The Pzkorps staff also had a transport aircraft flight for senior staff officers.)

Fallschirm Panzer Division 1 "HG"



Fallschirm Panzergrenadier Division 2 "HG"

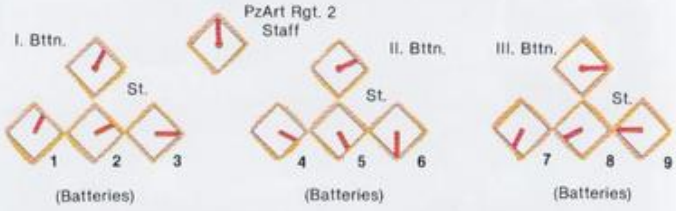


Fallschirm Panzer Regiment "Hermann Göring"

Fallschirm Panzer Sturmegeschütz Battalion "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Artillerie Regiment 1 "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Artillerie Regiment 2 "HG"



Fallschirm Panzer Recon. Battalion 1 "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Pioneer Battalion 1 "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Pioneer Battalion 2 "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Recon. Battalion 2 "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Radio Communications Bttn. 1 "HG"

Military Police Troop 1 "HG"

Fieldpost Detachment 1 "HG"

Fallschirm Panzer Radio Communications Bttn. 2 "HG"

Military Police Troop 2 "HG"

Fieldpost Detachment 2 "HG"

ϟϟ Tiger Units

The *Waffen SS* also had several Tiger battalions, plus Tiger companies attached to the *SS PzGren. Divisions* for the 1943 Russian battles. *1. SS PzGren. Div. Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler*, *2. SS PzGren. Div. Das Reich*, and *3. SS PzGren. Div. Totenkopf* all had Tigers at Kursk.

1. SS PzGren. Div. LAH received a company of Tiger Is in late 1942, and first used them during the battle for Kharkov in January of 1943. These Tigers were painted overall Dark Yellow with a sprayed pattern of Red Brown. The division sign was carried on the front plate near the driver's visor. The tanks were numbered for the 4th company and numbering followed the 3-digit standard on both sides of the turret and on the rear stowage box.

At Kursk, *LAH* had thirteen Tiger Is which were incorporated as the 13th company, attached to the *Pz. Rgt.* The tanks were painted Dark Yellow with oversprayed Red Brown on the turret and hull. Some vehicles had additional brushed on color on the hull sides. The turret numbering system was non-standard. The company number 13 was in Red with White borders, and the individual tanks were numbered consecutively 01 through 13. The vehicle numbers were two-thirds the height of the company number, and were also Red and White. *LAH* Tigers did not use a division sign at this time.

2. SS PzGren. Div. Das Reich organized its fourteen Tiger Is into the 8th company of the *Pz. Rgt.* The Tigers in *Das Reich* were Dark Yellow with Red Brown and Olive Green, oversprayed in soft edged patches. The turret numbers were painted in White outline. The numbering system used an *S* for *schwere* (heavy) followed by a two digit tank number. This identified the platoon and vehicle (*S11-S14*, *S21-S24*, and *S31-S34*). *S01* and *S02* were the com-

In early 1943, 1st SSPzGrenDiv Leibstandarte SS "Adolf Hitler" received a company of Tiger I tanks. This vehicle is Dark Yellow with a sprayed pattern of Red Brown. The three digit number is a Black stencil. The Tiger company was numbered as the 4th company at this time, but was renumbered before the battle of Kursk. (NARS)

Another view of "411" shows the camouflage pattern of Red Brown over the Dark Yellow base color. Just visible on the edge of the turret side is the last digit of the turret number. This vehicle later had the emblem of "LAH" painted in White on the upper left corner of the front plate, near the driver's visor. (NARS)

During the battles in the Kursk salient, July 1943, "LAH" renumbered its Tiger company as the 13th company in the tank battalion. This Tiger carries the new turret number, "1313", in Red with White borders. The company two-digit number is fifty per cent taller than the platoon and vehicle numbers. Note the brush painted Red Brown strokes on the hull side plate. (NARS)

(Left) 2nd SS PzGrenDiv "Das Reich" had fourteen Tigers organized as the 8th company of the tank regiment. This Tiger is seen in the spring of 1943. It is Dark Yellow oversprayed with Red Brown and Olive Green. The division "wolfsangel" sign is White. (Bundesarchiv)

This view of the tank seen above shows the White division sign. The "dappled camouflage" is the result of sunlight filtering through the trees. It is not known if the turret numbers have been applied. On many occasions, new vehicles did not receive all their unit markings until some time had passed. (Bundesarchiv)

"Hermann Göring" Vehicle Markings

SdKfz 10/5 light flak halftrack, Brigade "Hermann Göring", Russia, 1942.

Opel "Blitz" light flak truck, Regiment "General Göring", Russia, 1941.

Panther ausf A, I/FschPzRgt "Hermann Göring", East Prussia, October 1944.

During the Kursk battle, German units fought in several towns and cities. This Tiger I of "Das Reich" is Dark Yellow with Red Brown and Olive Green mottling. The vehicle number is White. On the front turret side is the White gnome of the Tiger company. The Feifel air cleaners have been removed from this vehicle. (Bundesarchiv)

(Left) This rear view of the same company shows the air recognition flags carried on the stowage bins, and the Feifel air cleaners on the rear hulls. The division sign on the left mudguard is White.

This closeup view shows the White gnome in detail. It is applied with a stencil. The turret numbers, in outline form, are also White. Outline numbers were often used to reduce contrast against the camouflage. (Bundesarchiv)

"Das Reich" used the Kursk temporary unit sign for several months after the battle. These Tigers are seen in the early winter of 1943-44 in northern Russia. They still carry the "S" series turret numbers and the gnome in White. The color scheme is the three color camouflage used at Kursk. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) This Tiger carries the "S" series turret number and the White gnome. The Feifel air cleaners have been removed from some of the tanks since the dust levels were lower in this snow covered terrain.

This Tiger I carries the White gnome and Kursk division sign. This Tiger also has had the Feifel air cleaners removed. The turret numbers are painted on the rear part of the turret side plate. (Bundesarchiv)

3rd SS PzGrenDiv "Totenkopf" had a company of Tiger I tanks at Kursk. This example carries a heavy wavy pattern of Olive Green and Red Brown over the Dark Yellow base. This tank is seen moving up to the front, and does not yet carry the division's Kursk temporary unit sign. (Bundesarchiv)

The temporary symbol used by "Totenkopf" was usually applied in White, but some vehicles also carried it in Black. This Tiger I has the simplified version of the sign: three vertical bars without the horizontal line. (Bundesarchiv)

This Tiger I of "Totenkopf" carries a Black turret number denoting the commander's tank of the Tiger company, which was numbered as the 1st company in the tank battalion. The color scheme is Olive Green and Red Brown over a base of Dark Yellow. (Bundesarchiv)

pany staff vehicles. A unique additional company symbol was a White gnome, stenciled onto the turret sides. *Das Reich* used the divisional *wolfsangel* symbol in Yellow Ochre, and then for the Kursk offensive, used the temporary division sign, painted in White, on the front and rear of its Tiger Is. This marking was still in use several months later.

3. SS PzGren. Div. Totenkopf had fifteen Tiger Is and, like *Das Reich*, organized these tanks into an extra company attached to the *Pz. Rgt.* These tanks were numbered for the 1st company — the commander's vehicle was 100. The remainder of the tanks were numbered using the standard three digit system. Totenkopf tanks had a Red Brown overspray, and carried the Kursk divisional insignia. The turret numbers were Black and White. After Kursk, *Totenkopf* received some replacement vehicles which featured the new cast cupola. These tanks had a heavier overspray of Red Brown than the Kursk Tigers and carried no divisional insignia.

After the end of the Kursk offensive, *1. SS PzGren. Div. LAH* was sent to Italy for refitting. All the vehicles were left in Russia and used to resupply *Das Reich* and *Totenkopf*. *Das Reich* used the temporary Kursk divisional sign until the following winter, and also retained the White gnome company symbol. The Tigers were then painted with new turret numbers as the 8th company, using the standard three digit number system. The tanks carried these numbers until the 8th company was detached from *Das Reich* to form the cadre for *sSS PzAbt 102* in March 1944.

1. SS PzGren. Div. Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler was redesignated *1. SS Pz. Div. LAH* after its refit in Italy in late 1943. In November, *LAH* returned to the lower Dnieper area in Russia and served until March 1944. It was then withdrawn to France in anticipation of the Allied invasion of Europe. *LAH* retained its 13th company of Tigers. The vehicles were Dark Yellow with a Red Brown overspray. The division sign of *1. SS Pz. Div. LAH* was painted on the driver's side of the front plate, in White. The turret numbering system was changed again. The Tigers were numbered consecutively with an *S* for *schwere* (heavy) being used as a prefix. The numbers were Red with White borders. During the winter of 1943-44 White camouflage paint was smeared over the tanks. The divisional sign was not carried at this time. In the spring of 1944, the heavy company was detached to form *sSSPzAbt. 101*.

The *Waffen SS* formed three Tiger battalions: *sSSPzAbt. 101*, *102*, and *103*. These were all intended for use as corps level heavy tank support units, and generally were not assigned to any single *SS* division on a long term basis.

sSSPzAbt. 101 was formed in the spring of 1944, and was intended to be a corps level heavy tank support unit. The battalion was part of *I SS PzKorps*, and was assigned to various units as needed. The cadre came from *1. SS Pz. Div. LAH*, the 13th company of LAH becoming the 2nd company of *sSSPzAbt. 101*. The battalion was equipped with Tiger Is, and was heavily engaged during the Normandy campaign. The Tigers had cast cupolas, zimmerit coatings, and most had the steel-rimmed roadwheels intended for the *Tiger II ausf B*. They had sprayed three color camouflage schemes and carried the symbol of *I SS PzKorps* on the front plate. This symbol was very similar to the sign for *LAH*, reflecting the relationship between these two formations. Instead of one key inside the shield, there were two crossed keys. Tigers in the 1st and 3rd companies carried the division sign on the left side of the driver's front plate, and the 2nd company carried the sign on the right side of the front plate. The first company also carried a tank rhomboid sign with an *S* (*schwere*) inside and the company number (1) next to the rhomboid. *sSSPzAbt. 101* was as signed to support *12. SS Pz. Div. Hitlerjugend* during the Normandy campaign. Both units suffered heavy loss of vehicles during this campaign.

In September 1944, *sSSPzAbt. 101* was re-equipped with *Tiger II ausf Bs*, and was redesignated *sSSPzAbt. 501*. It supported the German advance during the Ardennes offensive, operating in the area near Joachim Peiper's *Kampfgruppe*. After the retreat from the Ardennes, *sSSPzAbt. 501* was sent to Hungary and was engaged in the heavy fighting there until the end of hostilities. The Tiger IIs of *sSSPzAbt. 501* had zimmerit, three color sprayed camouflage schemes, and carried the *I SS PzKorps* sign on the right side of the glacis plate, next to the bow MG. The turret numbers, painted in Yellow, followed the standard three digit format.

sSSPzAbt. 102 was formed in February of 1944, and received forty-five Tiger Is in April and May. The battalion was part of *II SS PzKorps*. During the campaign in Normandy, *sSSPzAbt. 102* was stationed south of Calais, from where its 1st and 2nd companies were engaged in battles near Caen and other nearby areas. The Tigers of *sSSPzAbt. 102* used the standard three digit turret number format. In the fall and winter of 1944-45, *sSSPzAbt. 102* was reformed as *sSSPzAbt. 502*. It was re-equipped with *Tiger II ausf Bs* and dis patched east to defend Germany against the great Russian offensive aimed at Berlin. It left for the front in February of 1945, with a full complement of thirty-seven Tiger IIs, but had been destroyed by the end of hostilities.

sSSPzAbt. 103 was formed in early 1944 from the Tiger company in *3. SS Pz. Div. Totenkopf*. Additional personnel came from *Das Reich*, *LAH*, and *Hohenstaufen*. The battalion was training during the Normandy invasion. It received its first *Tiger II ausf Bs* in October 1944, and was redesignated as *sSSPzAbt. 503*. In January of 1945 *sSSPzAbt. 503* was sent to the east, and ended the war fighting in the area around Danzig-Gotenhafen in East Prussia. The Tiger IIs of this unit did not have zimmerit coatings and had three color camouflage schemes augmented by liberal use of foliage. *sSSPzAbt. 503* surrendered on 9 May 1945, to Russian troops in East Prussia.

This Tiger I of "Das Reich" is seen during the spring of 1944. It carries a modified three color camouflage scheme. The light patches are freshly sprayed Dark Yellow, intended to cover unwanted patterns. The Red Brown has been sprayed over much of the tank, and Olive Green mottling added over that. The turret numbers are White outline stencils. (Bundesarchiv)

This Tiger I of sSSPzAbt, 101 in France during mid 1944, carries a color scheme of Dark Yellow with Olive Green wavy lines and the turret numbers in Red with White borders.

(Right) This Tiger in the same company shows the placement of the unit insignia. The unit symbol for 1st SS PzKorps is in White, just behind the legs of the seated crewman. The 1st company of sSSPzAbt 101 carried the unit sign on the left side. The tank rhomboid, with an "s" to denote a heavy tank unit, is in White on the right edge of the front plate, along with the company number. (Bundes archiv)

Most of the Tigers of sSSPzAbt 101 ended like this one, destroyed in the battle for Normandy. Though most of this burned out Tiger is covered with charred paint and soot, the remains of the Dark Yellow and Olive Green color scheme can be seen. The 1st SS PzKorps sign and heavy tank company symbol are in White. (Bundesarchiv)

In the absence of special recovery vehicles, and in violation of regulations, Tigers sometimes had to tow other broken down tanks. These Tigers of the 2nd company, sSSPzAbt 101, carry color schemes of Dark Yellow with very light mottling in Red Brown and Olive Green. Note the low contrast of this scheme compared to the very heavy application of Olive Green in the 1st company. The turret number on the towed tank is Red with a White border. (Bundesarchiv)

This closeup of the towing vehicle seen above details the unit markings. The sign for 1st SS PzKorps is carried on the right side of the front plate in White. This position for the PzKorps marking identifies the 2nd company. (Bundesarchiv)

Movement during the day was dangerous, but often necessary. These Tigers of the 2nd company are Dark Yellow with mottling in Red Brown and Olive Green. The turret numbers are Red and White.

Another Tiger I, of the 3rd company, sSSPzAbt 101, seen during an exercise before the Normandy invasion. The color scheme is Dark Yellow with a sprayed mottle of Olive Green. The turret numbers are Red and White. The White unit sign is on a Black square.

One characteristic feature of the markings of sSSPzAbt 101 was the broad strokes used to paint the turret numbers. The numbers on this Tiger I of the 3rd company are Red and White. The color scheme is Dark Yellow and Olive Green. The divisional insignia does not have the usual black background.

Hermann Göring PanzerKorps

The earliest beginnings of the famous *Hermann Göring* ground units in the Luftwaffe can be traced back to 1933, when Hermann Göring created a special police unit (*Polizeiabteilung z.b.V*). By December of 1933 this police group was designated *Landesgruppe General Göring*. With the adoption of general conscription in March of 1935, the *Landesgruppe* was renamed *Regiment General Göring*. The following October 1st, the regiment was officially transfered into the *Luftwaffe*, and a volunteer *Fallschirmschutzen battalion* (Parachute Infantry battalion) was formed which provided a cadre for future *Luftwaffe* paratroops and field units.

Regiment General Göring (RGG) was one of the units to march into Austria in 1938, but immediately after this, the *Fallschirmschutzen* units were detached. The regiment was reorganized, primarily as an anti-aircraft unit, with flak and searchlight battalions. Most of the regiment remained in Germany during the Polish campaign. In April of 1940 a rifle battalion was added, which participated in the invasion of Norway. *RGG* joined German ground forces during the invasion of France and the Low Countries in May 1940. The regiment served with distinction, and returned to Germany in the fall of 1940.

RGG served in the Balkans campaign in the spring of 1941, serving as the flak defense for the Ploesti oil refinery complex in Rumania. In June, the regiment crossed the Bug river during BARBAROSSA, and again served with distinction during the 1941 Russian campaign. Most of the regiment had returned to Germany by the end of 1941.

Regiment General Göring was expanded to brigade strength in mid-1942. *Brigade Hermann Göring (BHG)* contained three *Schutzen* (infantry) battalions in one regiment, and a reinforced flak regiment. The third battalion in the infantry regiment had a motorcycle company, an armored pioneer company, a tank destroyer company and a tank company. The flak regiment included armored light flak units and a howitzer battery. Later, a third battalion was added to the flak regiment, with three batteries of field howitzers. IV battalion was assigned to Berlin as a special flak unit.

In October, 1942, the brigade was expanded to a full division and was renamed *Division Hermann Göring*. It now contained two grenadier regiments, one incomplete Jager regiment (from paratroop units), a forming *Panzer Regiment* (incomplete at the start of 1943), a flak regiment, an artillery regiment, reconnaissance battalion, armored pioneer battalion, armored communications unit, and medical and support units. Because of the lack of experienced armor officers in the *Luftwaffe*, Army *(Heer)* personnel were transferred to *Div. HG* during 1942-43, in exchange for *Luftwaffe* personnel who were assigned to army tank units.

In late 1942, elements of *HG* landed in Tunisia to oppose the TORCH landings. By the spring of 1943, a large part of the division had landed in Tunisia, where it formed *Kampfgruppe Schmid*. The organizations of all German units in Tunisia were very flexible, and *Kampfgruppe Schmid* was no exception. Command groups were formed, reformed, and disbanded according to combat needs and forces available. By the end of April 1943, there were over 10,000 *Hermann Göring* troops in Africa. The bulk of this force surrendered on May 12, 1943, but General Schmid and some personnel were evacuated to Sicily and Italy.

With the bulk of the division destroyed in Tunisia, the units in Italy, France and Germany were quickly expanded and organized into a *Panzer Division*. During the summer of 1943, elements of *HG* were brought to the Naples area in Italy. The division was transfered to Sicily, with *15th PzGren. Div.* At this time, *HG*was a full *Panzer Division*, with a tank regiment (two tank battalions and a *StuG* battalion), two armored infantry regiments, an armored artillery regiment, armored pioneer battalion, reconnaissance battalion, and support units.

Pz. Div. Hermann Göring was engaged in the defense of Sicily. After early successes, German forces were forced to retreat under Allied naval gunfire and, later, superior armored forces available to the Allied troops. Most of *HG's* PzKpfw III and IV tanks were destroyed. As *HG* and other German troops were slowly driven back toward Messina, it became obvious that Sicily was going to be lost. German units were evacuated across the strait of Messina in the well-coordinated OPERATION LEHRGANG. *HG* reached Italy with most of its personnel and equipment intact. *HG* had played a major role, along with *15th PzGren. Div.*, in delaying the Allied advance on Sicily so that the evacuation could be carried out successfully.

After the US landings at Salerno and the British landing at Calabria, *Pz. Div. Hermann Göring*, with *3rd PzGren. Div.*, slowed the Allied advance, and allowed the destruction of the port of Naples.

Perhaps the most noted campaign in Italy was the defense of the Gustav Line at Cassino. *Hermann Göring* was held in reserve in late 1943, but was put into the line near Cassino in January 1944. The Allied landing at Anzio-Nettuno, on January 22, caught the Germans by surprise, but because the US commander chose to consolidate his forces before driving on Rome, Field Marshal Kesselring was able to counter the landing with emergency troop movements. Units from Italy, France, Germany, and even Yugoslavia, were rushed to the Anzio area, and were successful in containing the Allied beachhead. In eight days, the Germans moved in 8 divisions to hold the new defensive perimeter. Elements of *HG* were some of the first units to arrive. In February *HG* was redesignated *Fallschirm Panzer Division Hermann Göring* (Parachute *Panzer Division*).

The fighting at Anzio was extremely heavy and casualties were severe on both sides. *HG* defended Cisterna, to the east of Anzio. In March of 1944, Kesselring ordered a new defensive line — the Caesar Line — built across the Italian peninsula. *Hermann Göring* was withdrawn from the lines at Cassino and Anzio, once those sectors were stabilized, and sent to Toscana for rest and refitting. In May of 1944, *HG* was rushed to the Nettuno area to counter the Allies' spring offensive from the Anzio beachhead. This time, the Germans could not hold against the eleven Allied divisions attacking them, and they were forced to withdraw east of Rome. Rome was liberated by Allied troops on 6 June 1944 — D-Day. Kesselring set up yet another defensive line across Italy — the Arno Line, which ran from Pisa through Florence and then across the Apennine mountains. By then, *HG* had been withdrawn from Italy.

Fallschirm Panzer Division Hermann Göring was taken out of the line south of Florence and sent to the Eastern Front to reinforce *FM* Model's attacking forces. The division was engaged against the Russian 3rd Tank Corps near Warsaw in Poland in August 1944. *HG* was commended by Model for its actions in halting the Russian advance.

In October of 1944, *Fsh. Pz. Div. Hermann Göring* was expanded to a *Panzerkorps*, but because of a shortage of tanks, the second division in the *Panzerkorps* was organized as a *Panzergrenadier Division* rather than a full *Panzer Division*. This was *Fallschirm Panzergrenadier Division 2 Hermann Göring*; the *Fsh. Pz. Div. HG* was given the number 1. Heavy casualties in the fall and early winter of 1944 necessitated heavy infusions of green troops, many from other *Luftwaffe* formations, who had to be trained as soon as possible. Both divisions were considered combat ready when the great Russian winter offensive started in January 1945.

Fsh. PzGren. Div. 2 HG was detached from *PzKorps HG* in mid-January to stop Russian breakthoughs near Magnuszev and Pulavy in Poland. The great Russian winter offensive was so massive that all the German forces, including HG, were pushed back into East Prussia. After a series of fierce battles, the survivors of *PzKorps HG* — about 6,000 men — were evacuated from East Prussia by sea, and returned secretly to Silesia/Saxony after refitting. Once again, all the *HG* formations were together for the final battles of the spring in Silesia. *Fallschirm Panzerkorps Hermann Göring* surrendered on May 8 1945, while fighting south of Dresden.

The *Hermann Göring* formations used a system of tactical markings that was unique. In some respects it was a simpler system than the markings used by the *Heer* (Army) and the *Waffen SS*, and also had the advantage of providing additional security as to unit identity.

The earliest type of marking was used from 1939 to 1940 or early 1941. A White outline circle was painted on the left front fender and the left side of the rear body panel. Inside the circle were the letters *RGG (Regiment General Goring)* and above them, a digit for the company number. Staff vehicles do not seem to have used the letters or numbers, but these markings were developed over some months, and adoption of the full system may have been gradual. Vehicles were painted Dark Gray at this point.

In late 1940 or early 1941, *Regiment General Göring* adopted a unit sign, which was painted in White and Black on the right front fender or mudguard and on the right side of the rear body panel or real doors. This was a rectangle which contained a stylized oak leaf and two acorns. This sign was used during the spring of 1941 and early in the Russian campaign, but was dropped before the latter part of 1942.

At about the same time, a new marking system was introduced, which, in a few different forms, was to serve the *Hermann Göring* formations for the rest of the war. This new division marking was a circle, generally larger than the marking used in France. Inside the circle, a line was painted on a radian from the center to the rim. Each company's line marking corresponded to the clock position of its number: 1st Co.: one o'clock, 2nd co.: two o'clock, etc. This marking was painted in White, and was used for several months.

As the regiment increased in size, it was necessary to modify this clock face marking since it could accommodate only twelve companies. Thus, in late 1941 or early 1942, the outline White circle was replaced by a White solid disk. On the disk was painted a clock face marker representing the company or battery number as before. When the regiment expanded in size, however, the flak units were separated from the rest of the regiment by adopting two different colors for the clock marker. Flak units used a Red marker, while the staff and support troops used a Green marker. The regiment staff used a plain White disk with no markings. This new marking system overlapped the use of the unit sign of the oak leaf and acorns in the White rectangular border.

With the expansion of the regiment to brigade size, then to full *Panzer Division,* the revised clock face system proved inadequate. An expanded scheme of markings was adopted in late 1942/early 1943. This retained the solid White disk as the basic unit symbol, but now the clock face markers were painted in several colors, similar to the *Waffenfarbe* (fighting colors) used to denote the branch of service on uniforms. The tank units used Black as the marker color, armored infantry (*Panzergrenadier*) units used Green, flak and artillery used Red, armored reconnaissance used Gold-Yellow, communications used Brown, and the armored pioneer units used Black. All of the division's support troops used a White disk with distinctive identifying letters painted in Violet-Purple. Staff units were identified by a small disk of the marking color painted in the center of the White disk. Divisional staff vehicles used no special markings, carrying only the plain White disk. Since some units used the same color markings, they were distinguished by assigning an extra circle painted in the service color inside the White disk. Thus, the pioneers used Black with the extra circle to distinguish their vehicles from those of the tank regiment, and the artillery used a Red circle to distinguish their vehicles from those of the flak units. Since there were two *Panzergrenadier regiments* in the division, a number was painted next to the unit sign to indicate *PzGren. Rgt. 1* or *2 HG.*

In October 1944, the division was expanded to a *Panzerkorps* containing two divisions. Additional corps level units were allocated to the parent unit. *Fallschirm Panzer Division 1 Hermann Göring* retained the markings system based on the clock face. *Fallschirm Panzergrenadier Division 2 Hermann Göring* adopted the same markings system, but used a White square, set on one corner, as the basic division sign. The units assigned to *Fsh. PzKorps Hermann Göring* used a combination symbol. The White circle was superimposed on

(Above) This motorcycle reconnaissance unit of Regiment 'General Göring' (RGG) is equipped with plain Dark Gray vehicles carrying no unit markings. The standard army tactical sign for a motorcycle battalion is painted in White on the sidecars. (Alfred Otte)

(Above Right) This line of cars of RGG is also unmarked. The Luftwaffe license plates provide the only identification. The vehicles are all Dark Gray. (Alfred Otte)

(Right) This self-propelled 2cm Flak 30 is Dark Gray overall. The new unit sign for RGG is in White. It consists of a White circle with the initials RGG and the battery number (7) inside. This marking was introduced in France. (Alfred Otte)

(Below Right) A SdKfz 7 tractor of RGG, seen in France, carries the RGG circle in White with the company number inside, in White. Some units didn't use the RGG initials inside the circle. The vehicle is Dark Gray. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below) This Black staff car of RGG carries the staff tactical marking of a plain White circle. Note the hand painted "WL" on the license plate. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above) This Opel 3 ton Blitz truck is overall Dark Gray. The RGG shield on the right front fender is White, as is the battery tactical sign on the left fender, denoting the 2nd battery. (Uwe Feist)

(Above Left) The Germans used a number of light antiaircraft weapons mounted on trucks. This self-propelled 2cm Flak 38 mounting is overall Dark Gray. The RGG shield with the oak leaf and acorns is in White. The unit tactical sign, denoting the 5th battery, is also in White, as is the "K" denoting von Kleist's battle group during OPERATION BARBAROSSA. (NARS)

(Left) This column of vehicles in Russia is from a Flak unit of RGG. This unit uses a new shield outlined in White, with a White oak leaf and a Red lower field. The battery symbol, in White also, indicates the 3rd battery. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below) This SdKfz 7 tractor is from the same unit seen above. The shield can be seen more clearly here. The split circle is White with a Red upper field and a Black lower field. This appears to be a non-standard variation of the RGG circular sign. (Bundesarchiv)

(Above) This towed searchlight carries the RGG rectangular shield in White on the Dark Gray base color. The new tactical marking is on the left fender. The disk is White with a Red clock hand indicating the 2nd battery. (Bundesarchiv)

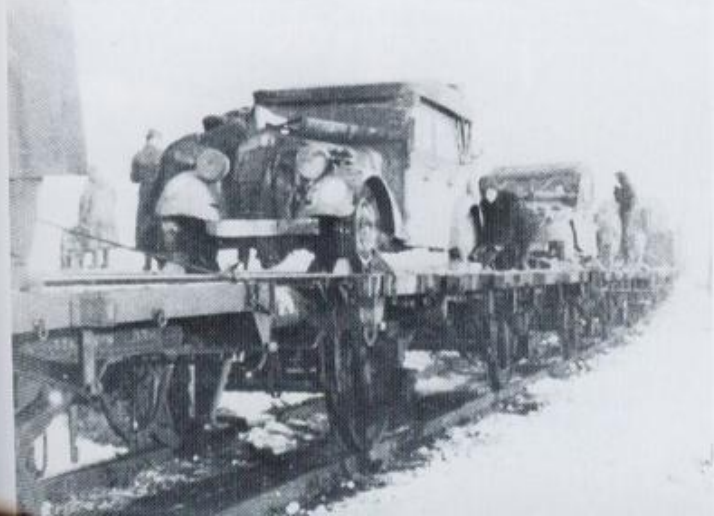
(Top Right) A towed 2CM Flak 30, seen in France, carries the RGG rectangular shield in White. The overall color is Dark Gray. There is a non-standard shield on the left rear fender. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) This SdKfz 10, seen in Russia, is Dark Gray overall. The RGG rectangular shield is White and nearly hidden by dust. The clock face is White with a Red hand denoting the 2nd battery. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) This early SdKfz 7 tractor and 8.8CM Flak 18 antiaircraft gun are Dark Gray. The RGG shield and clock face are White. The Red clock hand denotes the 6th battery. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below Right) The new RGG staff marking was also applied on the rear of the unit's vehicles. This staff car is Dark Gray, with the RGG shield in White and the and the plain White disk denoting the regiment staff. (Alfred Otte)

(Below) This staff car of RGG, in Russia during 1942, is roughly painted with temporary White winter camouflage. The RGG shield is White. The new RGG staff tactical sign is seen on the left front fender. This is a plain White disk with no clock hand marking. (Alfred Otte)



The "Ramcke" brigade which fought in North Africa adopted as a unit symbol a kite. This was painted in White with a Black outline and a Black "R" inside (denoting the unit commander). This NSU SdKfz 101 KKK carries the brigade sign in White and Black, on a White rectangle. The color scheme is Sand Brown and Dark Gray. (Bundes archiv)

Because of the shortage of supplies in North Africa, the Luftwaffe units often had to use Army vehicles and equipment. This Army typ 82 VW Kubelwagen still retains its "WH" license plate, and is overall Sand Brown. The "Ramcke" kite symbol is White and Black.

the square, and the corners of the square outside the circle were colored Red. Above this combined sign was the *Luftwaffe* eagle in Gold-Yellow, which was used to denote the *Panzerkorps* staff vehicles. Operational Corps troops used only the combined circle/square sign, with the appropriate clock face marking, or identifying letter in Violet-Purple.

Because of the shortage of men and equipment, the *Panzerkorps*, and the two divisions in it, were never brought up to full operational strength. However, this final markings system remained in use until the end of the fighting in May 1945. It is likely that replacement vehicles in the final months of the war may not have been marked completely, or that markings may have been painted by hand. This unique markings system ceased to exist with the capitulation and subsequent disbanding of *Fallschirm Panzer Korps Hermann Göring*. The various markings systems are illustrated in color to show the general organization and specific applications in each variation of the basic scheme. Additional color illustrations, and the photographs in this section, show the various markings as they were actually applied in service.

In addition to the *HG* armored formations, the *Luftwaffe* had several other field combat units — the *Fallschirmjäger* (paratroop) *Divisions*. After the early successes of the 1940 Western campaigns and the Crete invasion, the *Luft-*

In Tunisia, the shortage of combat vehicles also resulted in "HG" units that went to Africa being issued Italian vehicles and equipment. This Semovente assault gun still carries the Italian camouflage and tactical markings. (Bundesarchiv)

waffe paratroop divisions were used primarily as crack ground infantry units.

The *1st Fallschirmjäger Division* was formed in France during the spring of 1943, and was then transfered to the Mediterranean. The division first fought in the defense of Sicily alongside *HG*. The division was evacuated to Italy with other German units, and took part in the German opposition to the Salerno landings. From December of 1943, to February of 1944, the *1st Fallschirmjäger Division* served in the eastern flank of the Gustav Line. The division was then brought into the Cassino area, serving in this fierce campaign from February to May. The division then moved to northern Italy, taking up defensive positions north of Rimini from September to October 1944.

The *1st Fallschirmjäger Division* had two emblems. The first — primarily used on signs — was a Green devil riding a Red trident on a White square. The second symbol was a White parachute, and this was used both the division's vehicles, and on shoulder patches worn by the troops. The system of tactical symbols used by the *Luftwaffe* field units is not known. The clock face used by the *Hermann Göring* formations appears to have been unique to those units. It is likely that the standard *Wehrmacht* system of tactical symbols was used, as for *Heer* (Army) and *Waffen SS* units.

The *2nd Fallschirmjäger Division* was organized as a brigade size formation which served with distinction in North Africa under Lt. Gen. Hermann Bernhard Ramcke. The *Ramcke Brigade* fought at Alamein and, cut off by the overwhelming British advance, made an extraordinary forced march across the desert. The brigade captured a camped British supply convoy, and returned to German lines as a motorized infantry unit, with badly needed supplies to boot. The survivors of the African campaign were evacuated to Italy, and the brigade was rebuilt into a division, In September 1943, 2nd *Fallschirmjäger Division* was engaged in the fierce fighting north of the Salerno landing area, south of Rome.

The symbol of *2nd Fallschirmjäger Division* was the kite symbol made famous by the *Ramcke Brigade* in North Africa. Inside the kite was a large *R* (*Ramcke*) painted in Black. On some vehicles in Africa, the kite symbol was painted on a White rectangle, and a smaller letter — also painted in Black — was painted next to the base of the kite. This letter was the initial of the commander of the individual unit. On most vehicles, only the kite — White with a Black outline — appeared, with the Black *R* in the center.

The *4th Fallschirmjäger Division* was formed in Italy during January of 1944, and served in Italy until the early part of 1945. In June 1944, the division opposed the Allied drive out of the Anzio beachhead. From September to October of 1944, it was stationed near Bologna, as part of *1st Fallschirm Korps*. In April of 1945 the *4th Fallschirmjäger Division* was engaged on the Eastern Front serving as the army group reserve in *Heeresgruppe Sud* (Army Group South).

The symbol for *4th Fallschirmjäger Division* was a White comet with a multicolored tail — Blue, Red, and Blue. It is not known how extensively this sign was applied to vehicles, but it was used as a shoulder patch on the troop's uniforms.

(Above) The new expanded tactical marking system had been adopted by early 1943. This Kfz 69 heavy car is still Dark Gray, and has the White blackout markings. This is a staff car of a Flak regiment. The pennant is Red and Black with a White eagle. The tactical sign is White with a Red circle and "S", denoting a staff vehicle. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) This Dark Gray motorcycle carries a non-standard tactical sign for the 2nd battalion of the "HG" tank regiment. The disk is White and the ring and bar are Black. The pennant is Pink and Black with a White Luftwaffe eagle. (Alfred Otte)

This Ford 3 ton truck, seen in Italy, is Dark Yellow with Olive Green mottling. The unit tactical sign is White with a Red ring and bar denoting the 4th battery of the artillery regiment. The vehicle number is White. (Bundesarchiv)

This is the staff car of Genmaj. Conrath, the CO of "HG" PzDiv. The vehicle is Dark Yellow with an oversprayed pattern of Olive Green. The tactical sign is White with a Red ring and bar, denoting the staff of the artillery regiment. The division command pennant is Black, White, and Red with a Gold Yellow eagle. (Alfred Otte)

(Above) These armored cars carry the marking of the armored reconnaissance battalion, a White disk with a Black motorcycle battalion sign — an "X" in a circle. These vehicles are Dark Gray, and are seen in Rumania during 1941. They are among the first "HG" vehicles to use the new markings. (Alfred Otte)

(Above left) This SdKfz 232 armored car of the reconnaissance battalion of "HG" is overall Dark Yellow. The tactical sign is the White disk with a Gold Yellow dot and vertical bar, denoting the staff of the reconnaissance battalion. The name "Schultz" is in Black. (Alfred Otte)

(Left) These two vehicles are Dark Yellow, and are Italian Fiats. "HG" used a number of Italian vehicles during the Italian campaign. The marking indicates the 3rd battery of the "HG" artillery regiment, and is White and Red. (Bundesarchiv)

(Left) During the invasion of Norway in April/May 1940, a detachment of the Wach-Bttn/RGG (guard battalion GG) served in the German assault force. This Kfz 15 of the rifle battalion of RGG carries the Viking long ship adopted as a symbol of the service in Norway. The ship is White, and the vehicle is Dark Gray, covered with a very heavy coating of dust and mud. (Alfred Otte)

(Below left) Another early use of the solid White disk was in Russia during 1941. This staff car of RGG is Dark Gray and carries the interim tactical sign White disk with a Black symbol for a motorized infantry battalion. The command pennant for the rifle battalion is White with a middle Black band, and a White Luftwaffe eagle. (Alfred Otte)

(Below) This overturned truck of the "HG" administration company, seen in Italy, 1944, is overall Dark Yellow. The front license has been painted on a radiator brace. The tactical sign is White with a violet "V", denoting "Verwaltungs" (administration). (Alfred Otte)

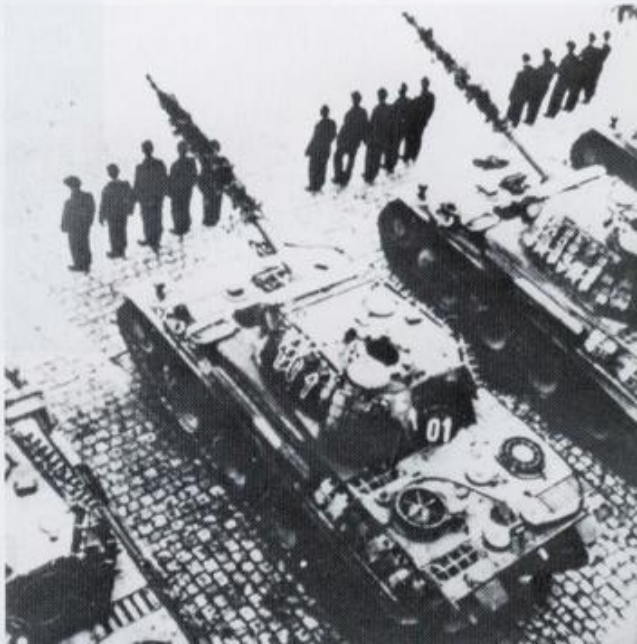
Two Panthers of PzRgt "HG" in Italy, 1943-44. They are overall Dark Yellow. The turret numbers, "I02" and "113", are Red with White borders. Note the star antenna on the battalion command tank. At this time, these vehicles did not carry any unit insignia. (Bundes archiv)

(Right) A column of "HG" PzKpfw IVs in Italy during 1943-44. The color scheme is overall Dark Yellow, with mottling in Olive Green. The turret numbers are Red with White borders. Note the fuel drums and jerricans on the rear deck. (Bundesarchiv)

(Right) The rear view of the above tanks show the plain national cross, the only visible marking. The turret numbers are Red and White. Fuel is carried in the drums to insure enough supply to reach the next destination. (Bundesarchiv)

(Below Right) These Panther ausf G tanks of PzRgt "HG", in Italy in 1944, are Dark Yellow with Olive Green mottling. The turret numbers "101" and "112" are Red and White. The rear turret numbers are White. Note the foliage wrapped around the gun barrels to break up their distinctive shape. (Alfred Otte)

(Below) This self-propelled 15cm infantry gun (PzSfl sIG 33) of FshPzDiv "HG 1" is attached to the armored infantry (Panzer grenadier) regiment. It is Dark Yellow with heavy mottling in Olive Green. The national cross is the only visible marking. (Alfred Otte)



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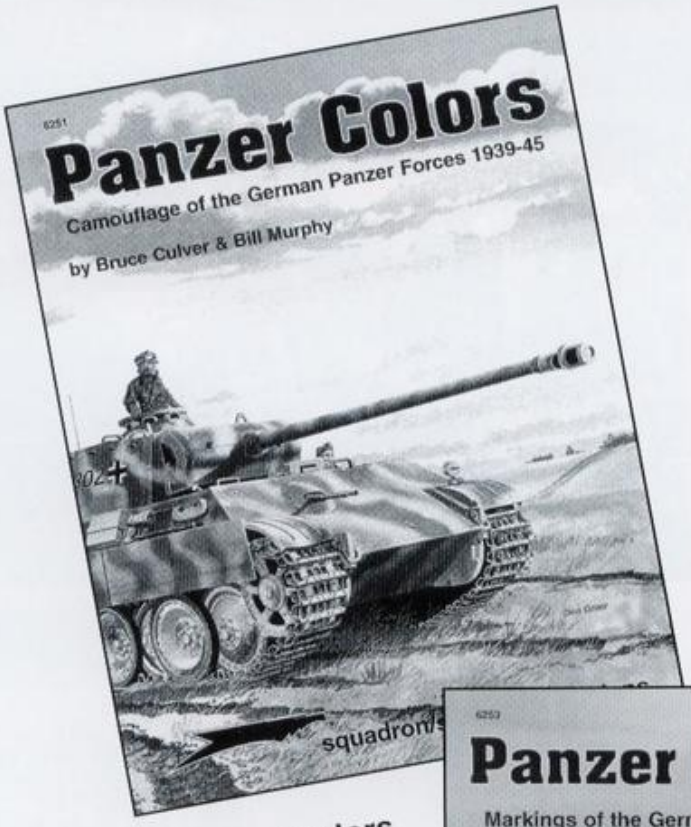

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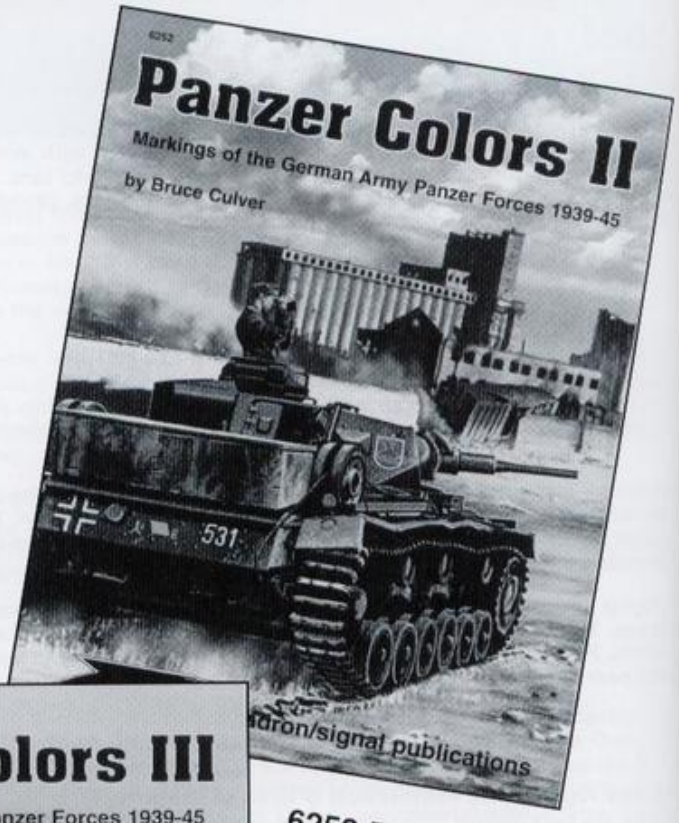

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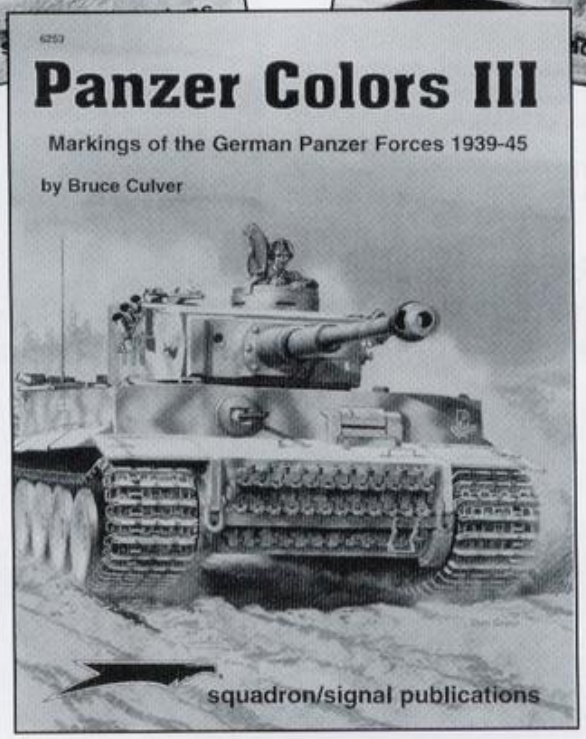

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